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THESE ARE BORZOI BOOKS,

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SOMETHING OF A HERO

32

—George Santayana



ALFRED A KNOFF NEW YORK

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TO
STELLA

THE CITY *of this novel,*
its names, its places, and its
people are all imaginary.

SOMETHING OF A HERO

BOOK ONE



NOT till he was standing in the middle of the floor and looking back at the tossed bedclothes and the overturned chair did he realize that he had been dreaming of Antietam again. The light of early morning was streaming through the windows and as he turned towards them, he heard a faraway boom. "It was the Fourth of July guns," he said aloud, "they made me dream." And he remembered from his dream the rattle of the rifle-fire and the whine of shrapnel and the gray column that withered in the sunken road while he and all the rest fired and kept firing until the carbines were nearly too hot to hold. . . .

"Are you all right, Father?" He heard his daughter Josie hovering outside the door. "I thought I heard—"

"I'm all right," he said. "Certainly, I'm all right." He looked down at the tails of his nightshirt stirring a little in the warm breeze from the windows. "I'm hungry. Breakfast ready?"

"In a few minutes," she told him. "You'd better hurry."

She went away, and he sat down to listen to the distant booming of the guns and the sharp popping of firecrackers and the shrill cries of small boys, all mingling with the warm wind and the rustling of the maples in the backyard and the smell of coffee and the high fleecy clouds of July streaming up over the faraway

horizon. "A long way from Antietam, I guess," he said, and awkwardly, because he had lost his left arm at Antietam, pulled his nightshirt off, and began to get dressed.

When he came into the dining-room, Josie was already seated at the table, looking through the *Chronicle*. As he sat down, she put the paper aside and poured his coffee.

"Delia gone already?" he asked.

"I gave her the whole day off," she told him.

He took the dish of bacon and eggs and served himself. "Much news in the paper?"

"I was reading about the exercises today," she said. "It gives you a funny feeling to see your name in print. I'm sorry now I promised Francis. . . ."

He smiled. "It just means reading. I should think a schoolteacher wouldn't worry about that. . . . But you're so stubborn, I don't know how Francis talked you into it."

She nodded. "He's got a smooth tongue, hasn't he?"

He looked up from his plate and asked almost brusquely: "You made up your mind yet about marrying him?"

"That's no question to ask," she said stiffly.

"Why not? Seems to me you've kept him dangling long enough. . . . It's time either to cure him or kill him."

"Don't be coarse, Father!"

"No need to be mealy-mouthed either," he said. "I've been wanting to tell you a long time now. . . ."

"Well, it's entirely my business. I'm old enough to take care of it myself."

"And old enough to be able to make up your mind too," he said.

She bent her head over her plate, and said in a lower tone: "I . . . when he comes here . . . in this house. He seems like a stranger then." Not meeting his eyes, she looked past him at the darkly-shining mahogany sideboard, the brownish portraits on the dark-red wallpaper, the worn Turkey-red rug, and sensed his rising anger.

"Godalmighty! So it's pride, is it, Josie? Cheap pride!"

She said more firmly: "After all, Father, we're practically the oldest family in town. I've got a right to some pride. I feel I have to be careful when I—"

"You going to get married to your pride, Josie? See what it'll get you. It'll sour you and wither you till you're a dried-up old woman, and there won't be anybody here to hang your picture when you're gone. Pride!"

"It's not just family," she said indignantly. "It's what the family stands for. You know what I mean, too, because from the time I was old enough to understand, you always—"

He grunted. "It's all right then. If those are the terms you're marrying on, go ahead and marry him."

"What are you talking about, Father?"

"His grandfather was in my regiment, in case you didn't know it," he said rapidly, with satisfaction. "Didn't have much reason to die for the country. Came over in '47 escaping from the famine in Ireland, and was done out of every cent he had by some sneaking New York shyster as soon as he got off the boat. Turned up here, working around the fine houses of the old settlers—didn't get rich off them, I'll tell you. But he had the time of his life in the army." He paused. "He got killed at Five Forks in '65."

Josie laid her fork down. "You never told me!"

He glared at her. "Oh, it's all right now, is it? . . . Because his grandfather died in the right place? Josie, sometimes you're a fool." She did not reply, and they finished breakfast in silence.

When she rose to clear away, he said: "Now, Josie, don't be huffy."

"Then I'll thank you not to tell me my business," she said. "Nor call me any names either."

He grinned at her. "I'll have some more coffee and a look at the paper while you're cleaning up."

She filled his cup, and passed the paper across to him. "I hope you don't expect to take in everything on the program today."

"Well, Josie, the country was only born once. It won't hurt me to celebrate a little."

"I suppose you and Mr. Schaeffer will be sitting in the hot sun all afternoon watching the ball game."

"Quit fussing at me, Josie," he said. "A little sun never hurt anybody."

"Well, you try to do too much," she told him. "After all, when you're sixty-five, you don't—"

"Don't go throwing my age up to me," he snapped. "I'm the best judge of my own actions."

"See?" she exclaimed triumphantly. "The shoe pinches, doesn't it?" She went out quickly with the tray of dishes, and he stared after her in bewilderment until it came to him what she meant. Then he grinned, and flipped the paper open and began to read the program for the day:

The Joint Special Committee appointed by the City Council to arrange for the observance of the 131st Anniversary of American Independence announces the program to be carried out on Monday, July 4th, 1907, as follows: At 5:28 a.m. (sunrise) the several city flags will be set. At 6:30 a.m. the several bells of the city will be rung for half an hour, and at 7:00 a.m. a national salute will be fired by—

". . . and if you get all tired out celebrating, when will you do your writing?" Josie's voice said from the pantry. "You told me you weren't going to let a single day go by without doing some."

"Never you mind," he called back. "I'll get some done if it's only a page. Just yesterday I was reading some old stuff—letters and such. I copied some off."

Her voice rose above the rushing of the water in the sink: "You ever going to show it to me?"

"Not till it's all finished," he said flatly.

"Well, I don't think you'll ever— The front door bell's ringing. Now who would be coming this early today? Will you answer it? . . . My hands are in the dish-water."

He muttered and laid the paper down. "Maybe it's old man White come over for a lick of brandy before breakfast." He got

up and started for the front door.

"Don't you dare give him a drink," Josie called after him.

But he was already fumbling at the chain on the door. When he got it open, he saw a small sandy-haired boy of about fourteen standing away from the door, holding a large basket on his arm. "What you want, sonny?"

"Morning, Mister," the boy said briskly. "Do you want to buy some fresh vegetables . . . strawberries?"

"Hey? Vegetables? No, I don't want any vegetables. You better try somewheres else." He began to close the door, but at the grimace of pain on the boy's face, he paused. "Here now, bub," he said, "what's the matter with you?"

The boy shook his head.

"What you doing, anyway, selling vegetables today? Don't you know it's Fourth of July? Why aren't you out shooting off fire-crackers with the other boys?"

"I got to sell these vegetables," the boy said.

"You don't live around here. Where you from?"

"Williston," the boy said.

"Williston! How'd you get here?"

"I walked."

"What's your name?—Tommy? Archie?" He saw that the boy's eyes were still dull with disappointment. "You walked five miles from Williston to sell vegetables on Fourth of July?"

"Yup. Ma thought that maybe with the stores all closed today, I could sell some."

"She must be a foreigner," the old man said.

The boy suddenly stepped closer to him and muttered angrily: "You take that back, Mister!"

"Godalmighty! What's the matter with you, bub?"

"Don't you say anything against Ma, that's what."

"No, I take it back," the old man said. "I didn't mean anything against your Ma. . . . Here, you come inside. I want to talk to you."

"No," the boy said.

"You afraid?"

"No, but I ain't had any luck yet, and I got to sell this truck. I told Ma I would. Pa laughed."

"Stop arguing," the old man said. "I'll buy the whole kit and caboodle of them. Come inside."

"You mean it, Mister?"

"Yes, yes. Of course, I mean it." He took the boy's wrist and drew him in.

Josie said behind him: "What is it? Who? . . . Oh." She looked at the small boy.

"He's selling us some vegetables," her father said.

"But we—"

"Yes, we do." They were in the living-room. "Sit down there," he told the boy.

The boy sat on the edge of the chair with the basket across his lap, and said: "The peas are fresh-picked. Eight cents a quart, and the strawberries are a dime a box."

The old man took a bill out of his pocket. "Is two dollars enough?" he asked.

The boy's name was Eddie Mundy. The farm backed up on the river near the Falls. It wasn't a very big one. Once it was bigger, but times got bad, and Pa had hurt his back hauling stone, and had to sell some land. He wasn't sure about selling it—he thought maybe the Bank had taken it away from them. He didn't know what good it was to the Bank—the land was just there with a sign up: NO TRESPASSING. It wasn't plowed and it wasn't planted, it just lay there, and they couldn't even use it for pasture. That is, Ma wanted to, but Pa wouldn't. Pa was still lame in the back, but he had let Nate Turner, the hired hand, go, and Ma was helping him with the farm work. "When school is out, I help too," he said without pride, but simply stating a fact. "Been doin' most of the chores since I was ten."

The old man looked at the thin body, the gray eyes in the solemn narrow face. "What you working so hard for? Do you know?"

The solemn eyes considered. "Keep body and soul together, Ma says."

"No more?"

The boy said rapidly: "I aim to make a lot of money one day and get the land back from the Bank—all of it till the farm's as big as when Grandpa got it."

"That's big talk, bub," the old man told him.

"Don't you make fun of me, Mister," the boy said, "I aim to get that money."

Josie said sharply: "Money isn't everything, boy. You could think of being of some use to your fellow-man."

"I thank you, Ma'am, but I'll have the money," the boy said without pertness.

The old man laughed. "I'll bet you will, too," he said. "Was your grandpa Joe Mundy? Old Black Joe, they used to call him after we came back from the War."

"Yup, that's Grandpa. He's buried out on the hill near the wood lot. Pa says he used to own all the land for miles along the river."

"I knew your grandfather, boy. He was a tough old hell-raiser."

"That's no way to talk to him, Father," Josie said.

"Yup, I know about him," the boy said. "Pa told me some."

"Made his money in the West," the old man went on. "When he was a deputy in Abilene, he killed three Indians in a saloon with a sawed-off shotgun."

"Pa never told me that," the boy said. His eyes lighted.

"Well, some day I'll let you read some of Black Joe's letters from the Plains. . . . I got some upstairs somewhere." He stood up slowly. "If your grandfather could do it—make money, I mean—you can, too. Matter of fact, you have already." The boy followed him to the front door. "You tell your folks you met John Cantrell. . . . They'll know of me."

He was smiling when he came back into the living-room, and Josie said: "I don't know whether it's your soft heart or your long nose that makes you do these things!"

"A little of both," he told her. "Come on now, Josie, let's get started. . . ."

EDDIE MUNDY walked slowly down the steps. He had the two-dollar bill clenched in his hand in his pocket. A nice old feller, he was thinking to himself. And the lady, with all that hair piled on top of her head—she'd be pretty if her face wasn't so tight. Now he could take the trolley out the Pike and then he'd have only half a mile to walk to the farm. Ma had told him if he sold all the vegetables he could ride home. He oughtn't to have taken so much—two dollars was away too much—but the old man had made him. He felt good. Ma would be glad. And Pa would bat him an easy one and call him "Astorbilt Mundy, Founder of the great Farm Trust! Some day, Eddie, you'll be so rich the government will have you in court and fine you a million dollars!" But Ma had said: "He can be rich without being dishonest." He would be rich, he knew that, and he felt his belief harden inside him like a heavy arrowhead. . . .

At first he did not realize that they were yelling at him. The next second when he looked around, he jumped because a fire-cracker had gone off at his heels. "Where you goin' with that basket? You got your grandfather in it?" one of them yelled, and the whole gang, boys about his own size, one of them colored, moved slowly towards and around him.

"What you want?" he asked. "What you want of me?"

They moved closer to him, forcing him back against the picket fence, and he faced them, pale and troubled. "Quit shovin'," he said, and watched them warily while they shifted around him.

Joe Cascione suddenly pushed Amby Tait so that he nearly shoved headfirst into Eddie. But Eddie knew this trick, and stepped aside so fast that Amby banged into the fence. The gang laughed, and Eddie laughed nervously with them.

"What're you laughin' at?" Joe said. "You wanna make somethin' out of it?" He took a step towards Eddie, and Eddie dropped the basket and put his fists up.

"Lookit the position!" Al Schaeffer said. "He must think he's Joe Gans or Jim Jeffries or somethin'." Then he caught sight of a corner of the two-dollar bill sticking out between Eddie's fingers. "Hey, look!—he's got a dollar in his hand."

Dave Bandler said: "Hey, where'd you get the dollar? I bet you stole it somewheres."

"I didn't steal it," Eddie said.

"Oh, no? Then where'd a kid like you get it?" Amby asked.

"Well, if you have to know, I was out sellin' stuff from my father's farm, and there's the basket to prove it." He edged along the fence. "I got to go home," he said.

"Aw, let him go," Indie Whipple, the colored boy, said.

But the others made no move to let him through. "Hey, Amby," Joe said, "didn't you lose a dollar this mornin' goin' to the store for your old lady?"

"Sure, sure," Amby said loudly. "Say, I forgot all about it." He turned to Eddie. "That's my dollar, kid, and you better give it back if you don't wanna get in trouble."

"Yeah, I was there when you lost it," Dave Bandler said. "We was lookin' for it everywhere, remember?"

"It's a dirty lie!" Eddie said. "This is my money, and nobody's goin' to get it away from me."

"Don't you call me a liar, you hayseed," Amby said, "or I'll give you a good punch in the snoot."

"You crookin' hayseed," Al Schaeffer said.

"You just try punchin' me," Eddie said. His insides were shivering, and he felt a wild and welcome rage gathering within him. "I'll take any one of you, one at a time," he said.

"Some fighter!" Dave said.

But no one moved forward to fight, and abruptly Eddie snatched up the basket, lowered his head, and charged. Surprised, they divided, swinging wildly at him, but he had broken through them, and was running with a lifting exultant drive down the street. They were chasing after him, but he knew they would never catch him. A torpedo went off at his heels, and the pebbles

stung his legs. He ran faster, drawing away from them all the time. Their shouts fell away behind him, but he kept on running for a long time, dodging in and out among the people on their way downtown to see the parade, thinking that he would sneak back some night and get one of them and trip him to the ground, and then squash his face in with his fists, driving them up and down into the dirty rotten stinking face beneath them.

WHEN Eddie turned the corner into Hamblin Street, they stopped chasing him, but kept slowly walking downtown, telling one another what they would have done to him if they had caught him.

Louie Davis said: "You're all fulla bull. You had him cornered there, but nobody swung at him. You hafta give him credit—didn't he wanna fight anyone in the whole gang?"

"Ah, I didn't wanna hurt the sucker," Joe said.

"Sure," Al said. "If I'd hit him, I'da killed him."

"In a pig's eye," Dave Bandler told him. "I could see you was scared to death of him."

"Didn't see you doin' anything either," Louie said.

"Go roll a hoop," Dave said. "What're you suckin' around big guys for? Go play with some kids your own size."

They all stopped, and Louie drew back a little from them. "You don't have to get sore . . . I'm nearly as old as you guys."

"Go on—beat it!" Joe Cascione said. "You're a shrimp. . . . C'mon," he told the others.

They turned and began to walk away from Louie. He stood for a moment, the corners of his mouth turning down. Suddenly he said: "Hey, wait!"

Al Schaeffer walked back to him. "Didn't we tell you to beat it?" he said.

"I got a two-bit piece," Louie said.

"Yeah? Let's see it."

Louie showed him the quarter, and Al turned around and called to the others: "Hey, he's got two bits."

Joe said: "Kick him in the pants, and take it away from him."

"Oh no, you don't," Louie said. "You're not gonna get any money away from me." He turned to Amby Tait. "Make 'em let me alone, Amby."

"Ah, leave the kid alone," Amby said.

"Sure, Joe, let the kid go," Dave Bandler said. "He c'n buy some candy or stuff with the two bits and divvy it up."

Louie moved up to walk beside Amby, but Joe grabbed him and said: "Let's see the two bits." When Louie showed it to him, he seized his wrist and began to twist it slowly, saying: "C'mon, drop it, or I'll break your arm."

Louie tried to pull away.

"Just for that—" Joe said, and threw his weight on the wrist so that Louie went down on his knees.

"Ah, leave the kid alone," Al Schaeffer said. "What do you want to rob his two bits for?" The others were all quiet because they were a little scared of Joe.

Without letting go of Louie, Joe said: "Shut up, Dutchman, or I'll give you what's comin' to you too."

"Oh, is that so?" Al said. "Don't you call me Dutchman, you dirty wop. I'm a better American than you are any day."

Joe let go of Louie and faced Al. "You are, huh? You wanna make somethin' out of it?"

"Well, why don't you start somethin'?" Al said. He had felt ashamed when they were picking on the other kid, and now he wasn't going to let anybody hurt a good little kid like Louie Davis if he could help it. "Louie's a good kid. He's been in the gang a long time."

"So you're tryin' to get out of it, huh?" Joe said.

"No, he ain't tryin' to get out of it," Amby told him. He picked up a stick and put it across Al's shoulder. "Go on, knock it off if you're so tough."

"What you buttin' in for?" Joe asked him. But it was no use talking now, they were all watching him, waiting to see what he would do, and he felt shaky inside, looking at Al's mouth with the lips drawn back a little from his teeth, and he knocked the

stick off. At once he felt Al's fist glance off his ear, and he rushed in wildly and clinched. But Al started pumping his fists close inside his guard, catching him in the belly and Joe broke away, while Al, his fists flailing, kept right on top of him. Yelling, the gang swayed back to give them room, and Joe held his fists in his favorite position, the way Ad Wolgast did in the cigarette pictures, but it didn't help because Al was driving in on him all the time, and all he could do was duck and clinch and swing wildly. Then, how it happened he didn't know, his nose was bleeding, and he tasted the blood, lukewarm and salty, in his mouth. He got scared, he was going to quit, when someone pulled him strongly away and said: "Come on now, boys. Stop this fighting. This is no way to celebrate the Fourth of July."

Startled, they all looked around, and saw it was Miss Cantrell from school and old man Cantrell her father. He was the one who had spoken, and they fell back, staring at the empty sleeve tucked into his pocket.

Josie said: "You ought to be ashamed—a gang of you fighting like hoodlums on the street!"

"What were you fighting about?" the old man asked.

They were silent.

"You gonna have us expelled, Miss Cantrell?" Amby Tait asked.

Louie Davis said suddenly: "He was tryin' to crook my quarter, that's why they were fightin', and Al gave him a good punch in the snoot and made it bleed. That's why."

"Dirty little squealer," Joe said. He was wiping blood from his nose with his sleeve.

"Oh, that's the way of it," John Cantrell said. "Now look here, boys, fighting's all right—there's times when a man has to fight. There's some arguments can't be settled just by talk. But—"

Josie pulled at his arm. "Father, come on. People are looking at you."

Some of the neighbors on their way downtown to see the parade had gathered a few yards away and were listening with curiosity. Her father glanced at them and raised his voice. "Let

them listen," he said. "It's a free country. They're free to listen, and I'm free to speak." One or two people laughed, and he waved in friendly good nature to them.

He turned again to the boys. "As I was saying, there's times when a man has to fight. But there's good fighting and dirty fighting. And the dirtiest fighting of all is for money. It's like dogs fighting for a bone. A human being ought to fight for better things."

A little spatter of applause came from the group that had drawn closer about him and the boys. He grinned at them, took off his hat, and bowed. "Better than a Congressman, hey?" he said.

"You talk too much," Josie said to him in a low voice.

Joe's nose had stopped bleeding. He muttered something under his breath, and when the old man said sharply: "Speak up, bub!" he stepped back as if preparing to dodge a blow and said swiftly:

"Sure, it's easy for you to talk, Mister. I bet you got plenty of money. But my old man says if you wanna live in this country, you hafta fight for money."

"Shut up! Shut up!" the boys behind him were muttering. "You wanna get us all expelled?"

". . . and that's all that counts here, he says. If you got money, you're all right, and if you ain't got money, people spit on you, he says. . . . I got a right to talk, too," he said over his shoulder to the gang.

The old man stepped back a pace. "You got guts to stand up to me, boy," he said. "But your father is all wrong. I don't think he means it. I think he gets mad sometimes, but I don't think he means it. . . . Where's he come from?"

"Italy," Joe said.

"I thought so. . . . Well, you just ask your father for me about Garibaldi. You ask him what Garibaldi fought for. If Garibaldi fought for money."

Josie said close to his ear: "Father, we'll be late. . . . Will you please stop making a public spectacle of yourself, and hurry?"

"Yes, yes," he told her. "Wait a minute, can't you?" He pulled

a fifty-cent piece out of his pocket. "Here, boys, buy some firecrackers and celebrate the Fourth the way it ought to be celebrated."

Al Schaeffer took the coin, looking up at him with a plea in his eyes.

"Don't worry, Albert," the old man said, "I wouldn't peach on you."

"Thanks, Mr. Cantrell," the boys said. "Thanks!" and when Al wheeled, saying: "The ice-cream parlor!" they whooped, and tore down the street after him.

"Like a bunch of wild Indians," Josie said. "Heaven only knows what kind of citizens they'll grow up to be."

"Don't you worry, Josie," her father said. "They'll grow up to be good men."

The little group of spectators had drawn up to them—Mr. and Mrs. Pinkney; George Duffield and his oldest boy, Stanley; old Henry Burton who had applauded his speech to the boys; Miss Emily Crowne; and some others whom the old man did not know very well. He looked around at them for approval of what he had said to Josie, but no one said anything, and he turned to her and repeated: "They'll be fine men."

"Maybe," said Josie, "but it's more likely they'll land in reform-school, and maybe in jail."

A murmur of agreement went through the group.

"Because they don't know what it means to be an American," Josie went on. "Their parents are foreigners, and so they're foreigners. You heard what the Cascione boy said, didn't you, about what his father told him about America? You think you're going to change him by giving him fifty cents for firecrackers and ice-cream?" Her father tried to interrupt, but she went on firmly while the others all came closer to hear what she was saying and nodded as she spoke. "It's going to take more than one generation to make Americans out of them."

"You're right about that, Miss Cantrell," Fred Curtis said. "But what can you expect? We don't get the best Europeans to come

here the way we used to—the kind that helped settle the country. No, we get the riffraff—if you'll pardon the expression, we get the scum of all the slums in Europe. Why, I was reading only last week in a magazine an article called 'Does the Melting-Pot Work?' and—"

"Godalmighty, aren't we high and mighty!" John Cantrell said. "You talk about them as if they weren't human beings, as if they were some kind of animal like goats or pigs that had wandered into the country and were dirtying it up!"

"And lots of them are," Josie said swiftly.

"Now you wait a minute, Josie. Mind your manners, and don't interrupt!"

Someone tittered at the old man's brusqueness, and Josie flushed.

Her father said: "You don't understand what this country means to them. Sure they come out of the slums, but they come because they want a better life. They got enough brains and feelings to want a better life. And that's a good start. That makes them Americans to begin with."

"I don't know," Fred Curtis said. "The way I think—"

"Excuse me, Curtis," the old man said, "but I haven't finished," and went on: "They come here, and they're full of hope and fear at the same time—just the way the first settlers were. Well, we got to do something for them—if we let them into the country, we got to make them our countrymen in more than name. Because if we fail them, they'll fail us." He nodded emphatically and looked around at them all. "If we hurt them, if we don't give them a chance to live a good proper life the way human beings should live, then they'll hurt us, they'll hurt the country. We got to keep the promises the country's made them."

He caught Curtis's eye, and Curtis said: "Well, sir, they expect too much." He had lighted a cigar and was holding it between thumb and forefinger, turning the lighted end up so that it would not burn too fast. "They have to work the way our forefathers worked before they can hope to have what we have. That's what I say," and George Duffield asserted: "Yup—that's right, Curtis.

Hit the nail on the head that time."

"Now look here, Curtis—" John Cantrell began hotly.

"Please!" said Mrs. Curtis. "You men! Let's have no political arguments today, let's just enjoy ourselves. After all, we don't get a holiday so often." She moved to Josie's side, and the two men fell back behind them. The whole group began to walk slowly along.

"Don't know any more fitting day for a political argument," John Cantrell said. "It was a political argument gave us this day."

He looked challengingly at Curtis, who said placatingly: "Maybe you're right after all." He paused and drew at his cigar, then lowered his voice, and said: "I understand the Bank is picking up some property along the river. I was wondering if—"

"I don't know anything about it," the old man told him shortly.

Curtis persisted. "It happens that I've got some options out that way."

"Not interested," John Cantrell said.

"I thought we might get together. There might be a pretty penny in it if—"

John Cantrell stopped short. "I said I'm not interested." He evaded Curtis's detaining hand. "You'll excuse me now." He moved up beside Josie. "We're turning off here," he told her. "Got to see a man . . ."

Josie said: "But, Father—"

He hurried her along, and they turned the corner into Madison Street.

"Come on," he said. "I'm mad enough to chew nails. That cheapjack Curtis makes me sick to my stomach. . . . We'll get the trolley a block over."

PAUL SAKARIAN, proprietor of the Ideal Ice Cream and Candy Parlor, bent his dark heavy face over the piece of cardboard he had torn from a candy carton and wrote slowly: CLOSE FROM 9 TO 12 FOR PARADE—OPEN AGAIN AT 12. He pulled the cardboard loose from the sticky marble counter, and ducking easily under the

curls of flypaper that hung from the lights, propped the card up in the window between the display of Turkish Trophies and the program card of the Scenic Temple moving-picture show. He straightened the card carefully because it brought him two passes every week to the show. He never missed a performance, and dreams of a beautiful American girl, as beautiful as the ladies in the pictures, in a flowing wedding dress standing with him before the altar of the First Apostolic Armenian Church troubled him with a vague sense of guilt. He knew that Sara Malkhassian, the nineteen-year-old daughter of his boardinghouse-keeper, wanted him for her husband, but he had long ago made up his mind to marry an American girl, so that his children would be real Americans. Heavily, he pulled himself back out of the window, and locked the front door.

On his way to the back room to change into his uniform, he stepped behind the counter again and took the money out of the gilded cash-register. He put it into a striped candy bag and tucked the bag under a mound of gumdrops in the candy case. He had not wanted to spend the money for his uniform, but Mardios, his best friend, had insisted: "You want to be real American, Paul? Get then the uniform." And when he had replied that he was a real American, though he had not yet told Mardios his dream of marrying an American girl, Mardios had said: "Then no more argument. . . . Do not be so stingy for your money, Paul." So he had bought the uniform and joined the Armenian Arshagouny Guards, and now, viewing as much of himself as he could see in the cracked mirror over the wash-basin, he was not sorry. He looked, he hoped, like the American soldiers in the moving-pictures. When he wrote again to his aunt and uncle and his two sisters in Guermuch, he would tell them about the uniform, and how much of an American he had become. Though he could not talk English very well yet, every night Sara's younger brother, Kevork, who went to high school, helped him and soon he would talk as well as Mardios. Yes, he nodded to his reflection in the glass, and marry a beautiful American girl with golden hair—

maybe Lily Marlow. Beautiful Lily, he thought.

While he was buttoning the light blue tunic, he heard the outside door rattling, and when he hurriedly emerged from the back room, he saw a gang of boys, their faces pressed up close to the glass. He pointed to the sign in the window and then at his uniform, but the boys began to pound. At the same time one of them held up a half-dollar to his view, and with a hasty look at the clock, he gave in and unlocked the door.

"What's the idea, Sakarian?" they asked him. "Say, look at the uniform! Boy, are you classy! I love my wife, but O you kid!"

"Tell quick what you want, boys," he told them, going behind the counter, but standing stiffly away from it in fear of spotting the uniform. "Come, hurry up! Today I march in parade."

"What, you march in the parade! Say, how long you been an American?" Al Schaeffer said.

"Whaddya mean?" Amby told him. "His grandfather fought in the Silver War. Hey, Sakarian?"

"My grandfadder fight," Paul said, "but not in America. In Armenia. With sword this long." He held out his arms as wide as they would go, and suddenly shaken by a terrible wretchedness, he remembered his father going down before the Turkish sabres in the courtyard of his grandfather's house in Ourfa and his mother being consumed in the flames when the Turks fired the Ourfa cathedral and the smell of the partly burned rotting bodies hung its sick weight over all the town for weeks after. "Yes, boys, my people know how to fight for in'pendence, too. Is why I'm now American. Two years more I got my citizen papers." He looked at the clock again. "Boys, don't spoil my time. Tell quick now what you want."

"Gimme a box of choc'late," Louie Davis said.

Paul served them all, and slipped the fifty-cent piece into the pocket of his tunic.

"We'll give you a cheer," Dave Bandler said. "When we see you go by, we'll yell: 'Look, there goes a fightin' Turk!'"

"No—not a Turk!" Paul said, but they were rushing out, and

he shrugged and went out a moment later, locking the door behind him. He walked stiffly down Hamblin Street to the car-stop, feeling proud in the uniform.

BY THE TIME the trolley got to Hamblin and Madison, it was crowded with people on their way downtown to see the parade. After the car got under way again, Jack Smith came swinging along the running board to collect the fares. Some pretty cute chickens had got on, and he liked to look them over, particularly when they wore the light summer dresses that clung close to their hips and busts. Some day, he was thinking to himself, he'd pick out one of the cute chickens and marry her. "You can get tired of being a sport, Smitty. After a while a man wants to settle down and raise a family. . . ."

"Fares, please," he said.

Sure, raise a family the way he was raised, with the house smelling all the time of wet laundry and fried pork, and kids falling all over the place, and his old man coming home drunk and the old lady, crying, putting him to bed, and next day the old man, quiet and sober, coming home from the printing-plant, bringing the old lady a string of beads, promising her he was off the drink for good and sitting down after supper with the paper to read Happy Hooligan and the Katzenjammer Kids to him and Ed and Margaret and Kate and Phil, and pretty soon in a few days coming home drunk again with not a nickel in his pants, and the old lady going to the minister, Reverend Bamford, about him and his boozing and Bamford bawling the living Jesus out of the old man and scaring him half to death with talk about the awful fire of Hell, and the old man promising and promising and promising. . . .

"Fares, please," Smitty said, and took the nickels rapidly, taking as many nickels at once as he could till he had nine or ten and then ringing them up very fast, but every once in a while ringing up one or two less than he had collected. He was worried about the spotters of the trolley company, and so he always made sure before he did any grafting that there wasn't a complete stranger, who

might be a spotter, on the car. But today, on this run, he knew nearly all the people—a couple he didn't know, maybe some hicks in from the country to see the parade, but no one who looked as if he might be a spotter. The boys were getting up a little game of poker to celebrate the Fourth, and he wanted to sit in without worrying about losing the first four or five pots and then having to make some excuse to quit because he didn't have any more kale while all the guys ribbed him along until he left and went back to the boardinghouse, promising himself he'd never gamble again, promising himself he'd save some kale, start a bankbook, promising himself he'd find a good girl and settle down and raise a family, and promising and promising and promising. . . .

"Fares, please," he said, and collected two nickels from old man Cantrell while he looked Josie over, stuck-up dame, though her old man was a good sport who liked to hoist a few once in a while down at the Indian House bar, and tell the boys stories of the town when he was a kid and stories about the Civil War. Those were the good old days, and if there was only another war, he'd enlist in the navy and get the hell away from collecting nickels all day long and go to China and the Philippines and Europe, and have a peacherino in every port. Or he'd get some money saved up and get out of this jay-town, go to Chicago or Philadelphia or New York even, where there was opportunity for a man to get somewheres, where there was plenty of easy money, and get a job in some big business—buy himself a big automobile, marry one of those rich stuck-up society pippins, own a big mansion, a suit for every day in the week, a big gold watch, see a show every night: promising himself he'd quit gambling, promising to lay off the booze, promising to stay away from the whores, promising to put away a couple of dollars every week, promising and promising and promising. . . .

"Fares, please," he said after the car had stopped at Osborne Street to pick up a man in a bright blue uniform whom he recognized with a start of laughter as Sakarian from the ice-cream parlor, who was shining up to Lily Marlow from Mrs. Kent's board-

inghouse and was crazy for a date with her, promising her the whole wide world if she'd go out with him, Lily half-drunk in the beer-parlor, saying when they started to rib her about the Turk: "Me go out with that greasy slob? Say, I'm an American. Think I'd go out with a greasy foreigner? Say, I got some self-respect." But just the same Sakarian looked pretty classy in the uniform—there was no getting away from it, a uniform set a man up. . . . Or go out West and get a job on a ranch. He would be a cowboy, ride a horse, wear a gun, it was a great life the way they showed it in the moving-pictures, get out in the great outdoors with a bunch of real men, ride the range all day, get tanned, sleep out under the stars at night, shoot coyotes, shoot cattle-rustlers, shoot up the town, let loose, be your own boss—promising himself he'd get away some day, promising to save up a hundred plunks, grab a train going West, drop off at a little town in Wyoming, bump into a big cattleman: "Say, pard, I'm a stranger here. Like pretty much to have a job ridin' the range." "Sure, pardner, forty a month and found. Hey, boys, meet the new hand. City slicker and a dude, but we'll make a cowman outa him,"—laughter, and men named Slim and Shorty shaking him by the hand, real friends, ready to fight at the drop of a hat, hard-riding, hard-drinking, hard-living. Promising to plan, to save, promising to think, to act, to go, promising and promising and promising. . . .

"Congress Square," he said. "All out."

JOHN CANTRELL and Josie got off the trolley with all the rest. Clanging its bell, the trolley moved slowly through the crowd beginning to line up for the parade, with boys running in and out among the people, firecrackers popping off, torpedoes on the track exploding under the wheels of the car, the giant flag in front of the Farmers and Mechanics Bank whipping out slowly and solemnly in the warm breeze, a smell of horses and cigars and violet talcum drifting on the air, the women looking lovely in their floppy summer hats, everyone smiling and laughing, and the bright sun pouring all its light in the Square, lighting up everything

sharply the way a pinwheel at night pushes the darkness and the shadows back and everything shines with a clear bright edge. "A wonderful day," John Cantrell said, "wonderful!"

They began to walk up past the Bank towards the City Hall when they heard the chugging of an automobile close by the sidewalk and at the same time heard their names called. They stopped, and the big new Peerless drew up beside them. In it were Will Cantrell who was John's first cousin; Will's son, Harvey, and Harvey's wife, Annabelle, and their son, Phil, who as usual was hunched over a book. They all greeted one another and Will asked: "Where you folks going?"

"City Hall," John told him. "Didn't you see in the paper where Josie here was going to read the Declaration of Independence at the exercises? You coming?"

"No, we're going to watch the parade from the second floor windows of the Bank," Harvey said. "That way we won't be pushed around in this mob. . . . Why don't you and Josie come up after she finishes her reading? I'll tell Archer to watch out for you and let you in."

"Well, we might," John said. "I don't know." He looked around. "Say, your new auto is drawing quite a crowd. Maybe you ought to put it in the parade."

Quite a few people had drawn close and were looking respectfully at the Peerless. Someone said loudly: "It's the Bank president, Mr. Cantrell, and his family."

From the street side of the automobile, a group of boys approached and peered into the tonneau where Phil sat bent over his book.

"Hey, look! . . . he's readin' a book on the Fourtha July!" Louie Davis said.

"Hey, Four-eyes, run home and tell your mother she wants you," Amby Tait said.

Phil put his head out beyond the strut. "Get away," he said, and went back to his book.

"Get away! Get away!" they mimicked him in falsetto voices.

Phil leaned out again. "How'd you like a good punch in the nose?" and Joe Cascione answered: "You come out of that auto and we'll knock your solid-ivory block off!"

Harvey came rapidly around the automobile into the street. "What do you boys want? Get out of here!" he said, and the whole bunch ran whooping back into the crowd. He put his head inside the tonneau. "For Heaven's sake, Phil! Can't you leave that book alone for a minute? Come on now, get out, we're going up in the Bank to watch the parade."

Phil, hunched over his book again, did not move.

"Phil!" his father said, and with a start the boy pulled his head up.

"Come on!" Harvey said. "You and your reading! . . ."

JACK SMITH, having finished going over in his mind the number of nickels he had not rung up and not being sure whether he had made fifty or fifty-five cents, decided not to take any chances, and out of the leather-lined change pocket of his coat took fifty cents which he transferred to his left-hand pants pocket. He leaned off the platform to look back at the crowd in the Square and wished he didn't have to make the run to the junction turn-out on the Pike. But it would be a quick run anyway, no one would be going out of town, and he and Tommy Clarke, the motorman, could sit a while at the turn-out and chew the rag before making the return trip.

At Pawnee Street just below the Square, a kid carrying a big market basket, stepped out from in front of the post, a kid in old corduroy pants and a faded blue blouse, who, when the car stopped, asked: "Does this car go to Williston? Does it go out the Pike?" and scrambled on when Smitty nodded as if he was afraid the car would leave without him.

Smitty wondered why the kid was leaving town just when the celebration was getting started, and he got suspicious and excited when after the trolley had got to the outskirts of town he went forward to collect the fare and the kid offered him a two-dollar

bill. "Where'd y' get this, kid?" he asked. "Y'didn't steal it, did you?"

Startled, Eddie looked up into the sallow narrow face over him. "No . . . no, I didn't steal it," he said. "I made it sellin' vegetables from my father's farm." He was excited and tired at the same time, his head ached, it had been such a funny morning, all he wanted was to get back to the farm and his folks, but he had to pull all his strength together and he could feel himself getting hot the way he had when the gang had him backed up against the fence. "Gimme my change. Don't you forget to gimme my change," he said.

"Don't get excited, kid," the conductor said. "I just wanted to make sure you came by this money honest, see?"

"Well, I did," Eddie said. He held out his hand, and Smitty, looking down with some surprise into the icy gray eyes, said:

"Don't get tough with me, bub. You'll get your change when I'm good an' ready."

The car was out in the country, the branches that grew close to the tracks whipped against the stanchions, and the hot heavy fragrance of summer filled the car. Beyond the conductor Eddie could see a wide field full of green corn and in the sky a flight of crows flapping toward a clump of copper beech that marched up a little hill into the deep blue of the sky. Pretty soon he would be home. "You gimme my money, Mister, or my father'll fill you full of buckshot."

Smitty stared at him, and forced a laugh. He mimicked Eddie: "My father's bigger'n your father, and my father can lick the stuffin's outa your father."

But the boy did not laugh, did not even smile, just kept looking straight at him, and after a moment Smitty said: "Don't get excited, kid. Here's your change," and gave Eddie his money. He had worked himself into a tight corner trying to rib the boy along, and he felt sore and stupid. "Now what did you start that for, Smitty?" he asked himself when he got back to the rear platform, but he knew far back in his mind that he had been thinking of

easy money the second the kid showed the bill. . . .

The car stopped at the switch-box to let Eddie off, and he felt good as soon as his feet touched the ground. He wanted to get home fast, he was anxious to show the folks the money he had made, and he walked briskly up the dirt road, kicking up a little cloud of dust before him and slapping at the woodflies that circled his sweaty forehead, tasting the excitement there would be when he walked in and laid the dollar-ninety on the kitchen table. He turned the first bend in the road, and saw his mother and his little sister Martha sitting in the sorrel grass by the side of the road, and he yelled: "Ma! Ma!" and began to run towards her. As he ran, the tears he had been holding back all morning, the tears of torment and rage filled his eyes so that the road and the trees and the fields all wavered. Then her arms were around him, and his face was pressed close against her. Martha was tugging at his blouse, saying: "Eddie, you're cryin'. Eddie, why you cryin'?" while he felt the steady quick pat of his mother's hand on his back.

After a moment he pulled away, and she ran her handkerchief over his hot face and eyes. "Feel better now?"

He muttered: "Some crybaby, hey, Ma?" and she asked: "You're not hurt?"

He shook his head quickly, and then suddenly excited again, picked up the basket and threw back the top. "Look there—empty!" he said.

She exclaimed: "You sold them all!"

"Yup—look!"

In his outstretched palm were the crumpled dollar bill and the ninety cents in change, and she took the money, counting it swiftly. "What a surprise! Your father'll keel over when he sees this," she said.

Martha was babbling: "Eddie, gimme some money too—gimme some," and he reached out and took a coin from the change in his mother's hand and gave it to Martha, feeling grand and powerful, saying: "There's a nickel for you, Martha."

His mother smiled. "Your father's right—'Astorbilt' Mundy,

that's the name for you," she said. "Now tell me all about it. What you did, and how you got so much and everything."

They turned, Martha clinging to his hand, and walked up the road towards the house, lingering under the overhanging sycamores, while he began to tell his adventures of the morning.

"I wasn't crying because I was scared of anything," he said, "but because I was so durned mad that they tried to steal the money away from me. . . . And I didn't cry in front of them, you can bet, Ma."

"Fighting for money is the way of the world, Eddie," she said. "You learned something this morning, and you're lucky all it cost you was a few tears. Do you know what you learned?"

He considered and said: "Yes, Ma."

"What?" she asked him, and he replied: "It's like you always say. You have to fight to get what you want, and then you have to fight to keep it."

She nodded. "See that you remember it," she told him.

They walked on. The wind turned the leaves slowly, the moist warm smell of the woods came out to them, and the shadows flickered on the road.

"We'll have a celebration, a Fourth of July celebration when we get home," Helen Mundy said. "I'll make a big pitcher of lemonade. . . . 'Astorbilt' Mundy!" she exclaimed, and began to laugh while he grinned uneasily up at her.

As they came into the City Hall, a number of people spoke to them, and John, glancing sideways, saw that Josie was pale.

"Godalmighty, Josie, someone'd think you were going to be hanged!" he whispered to her.

She smiled at him sheepishly. "That's just how I feel, Father."

"Well, brace up, then, because here comes somebody who's interested in you."

Francis Connell in a frock coat and gray striped trousers, a silk hat in his hand, came up and greeted them, and the old man said: "You'll roast in that outfit before the day's over, Connell."

"I know," Francis said, "but it's for the honor of the country I'm all rigged out."

"Look as if you were dressed for a wedding." John Cantrell's glance went maliciously to his daughter, but she gave no sign that she had heard him.

"A wedding?" Francis said. "Well, now, I wouldn't mind that either." He looked at Josie, but her face was hidden under the wide brim of her sailor.

A policeman approached them. "Beg pardon, Councilman," he said to Francis, "but the Judge is here, waitin' to begin."

"We'll be right along," Connell said.

They worked their way through the crowd in the lobby, and went up the main stairway to the broad landing where some chairs had been set out behind a great flag draped over the railing.

"I'll stand below here a piece," John Cantrell said. He walked to the end of the landing and waited by one of the gray granite pillars, feeling the cool silk of the flag beneath his hand. He saw Josie nodding to the others seated near her.

Then Connell, composed and dignified, was standing at the railing, looking down at the upturned faces of the crowd. "Fellow citizens," he said, "I intend to be brief. Better speakers than I are here, and better words will be spoken than I can say."

That's true and well said, the old man thought: Josie is a fool and deserves to die an old maid.

"Today," Francis went on, "we are gathered to pay tribute to the country that shelters us all, and to celebrate her deliverance from tyranny. We will begin with a prayer by the Reverend Joseph Fellows." He bowed and sat down beside Josie while the minister got to his little feet and came forward, his round head with its thin gray hair already bowed forward, his lips moving soundlessly a second before he began to pray.

From under his brows John Cantrell peered down into the crowd, looking for his crony, Marius Schaeffer. If he could catch Marius's eye, that would be enough to remind him about the ball-game up at Sheridan Park.

“ . . . pray that the light of Thy Countenance will shine upon us to keep our hearts pure and our spirits consecrated to the divine liberty and justice which we have derived from Thee. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen.”

There was a little pause when the minister finished. Then the bowed heads were all raised, the feet shuffled into new positions on the marble floor, and the faces were uplifted again.

Connell was standing once more. He waited until the crowd was quiet, and said smoothly: “The next speaker is known to all of you for the many years he has devoted to serving the people of this community in the seats of Justice. I present with pleasure the Honorable Frederick G. Woodward, Justice of the Superior Court of Quessota County, who will speak to us on ‘The Meaning of Liberty.’”

A little nervously the judge came forward to the railing, and cleared his throat. “Fellow citizens,” he began, “let us never forget that the true meaning of liberty is not license.”

John Cantrell wondered how many times he had heard this speech about liberty’s not being license. He looked idly down at the crowd, and suddenly saw Marius’s iron-gray head bent in rapid whispering to his wife’s ear. When Marius raised his head, the old man tried to catch his eye, grinning to himself as he saw Marius grimace at the judge’s words. He could guess all right what Marius had been saying to Emily. Why didn’t the old buzzard look up?

The judge was finishing his speech: “So again I say—we are free to mind our own business and live our own lives in this great country, but we are not free to meddle in the business of others or interfere with their lives. This is the thought I would leave with you today. I thank you.” His portly figure leaned forward slightly, his head bobbed, and he sat down.

Francis Connell came to the railing again.

John Cantrell said to himself: “She’s going to read it now; I hope she won’t foozle it. . . . Let it come out clear and loud, Josie.”

Connell was saying: “. . . daughter of one of those pioneer

families whose courage and industry founded our beloved city—Miss Josephine Cantrell.”

Then Josie came forward, her head up, and to her father’s pleasure began to read in a strong vibrant voice. The words fell slowly, almost floating in the warm air, and the restless crowd stopped fidgeting, and grew still.

The old man’s eyes filled with sudden tears. “You old fool!” he said to himself, but the words struck and struck again, and he felt his heart lift with a force he could not control.

“*. . . these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. . . .*”

The whole city ought to be here to hear this, John Cantrell thought—the whole city.

“*. . . that, whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it. . . .*”

Looking down at the crowd again, he saw Marius seize Emily’s arm and begin muttering into her ear. A policeman standing near by tapped Marius on the shoulder, and when Marius turned, held up his finger to his lips for silence.

“*. . . and to institute a new government, laying its foundations on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. . . .*”

Yes, the old man thought, he knew well enough what Marius had been saying to Emily. And he remembered Marius down at the bar in the Indian House, with a slow movement of his lower lip drawing the foam from his thick mustache, saying: “This Big Bill Haywood is the real thing, John—a real friend of labor. But they’ll land him in jail somehow. Somehow the Gold Bugs will get him.” He stared hard at Marius, trying to catch his eye, but Josie’s

voice seemed to summon him, and he turned to listen.

"Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established, should not be changed for light and transient causes. . . ."

He had replied to Marius: "Godalmighty, from the way you talk, you'd think the whole country was in slavery to the Trusts. But give her a chance—she's young yet. You can't go sweeping everything away just because a few things aren't just right yet!"

Josie's voice rang out: *"But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government. . . ."*

And suddenly he had Marius's eye at last, and Marius was nodding briskly at him as if to emphasize to him the words Josie had just read. He felt a quick anger: what right had Marius to pass judgment on the country? Wasn't he safe in a country where he could think and speak as he liked without being driven out as his father had been driven from Germany in '49? What stake had Marius in the country anyway? Marius's grandfather hadn't helped clear this Persepolis land of rocks and scrub and trees; Marius's grandfather hadn't built a sawmill on the banks of the Quessota; Marius's people hadn't worked to make a wilderness village into a prosperous town, into a fat little city. No, Marius's grandfather had not seen in the retreat from Washington the flames of the Capitol lighting up the thunder-heavy August night; Marius had not given an arm in the Civil War; Marius had brought nothing, and he had given nothing to the country that had given him so much.

And staring down at Marius, he shook his head at him sternly, without answering his smile, and thinking: What do you want? What is it you want of America now? He threw up his head angrily, and his hot hand cooled itself on the silken smoothness of the flag on the railing. Marius's head was now sunk on his chest, and he stood listening to Josie like a man of wood, chunky, solid, impenetrable.

Josie's voice flowed on smoothly and strongly: *" . . . has re-*

fused to pass other laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of representation in the legislature: a right inestimable to them, and formidable to tyrants only. . . .’”

And then it seemed to the old man that Marius was answering him. The voice spoke low in his mind, and he listened, and it was like hearing Marius’s voice over the polished table in the hotel bar: “Don’t think I don’t love this country, John. But it’s the people who count, not the ground they walk on. It was the people who made it—made it with their sweat in peace and their blood in war. But it’s not theirs any more. It’s been taken away from them and stuffed into the rich men’s moneybags. And you can call me what you like, John—a socialist or an anarchist or a revolutionary, I don’t care. All I want is for the people to take back what is theirs. That’s all I want!”

“ . . . taking away our charters, abolishing our most valuable laws, and altering fundamentally, the powers of our governments. . . .’ ”

The old man’s anger ebbed. He looked down at his friend’s bowed head and silently said to him: “But you can’t start another revolution, Marius, when the one the country began with is still going on! It’ll take a little time, that’s all. Give the country a chance. She’s just got started. You wait and see. . . . You’ll see!”

Josie’s voice came to him again, and he put Marius out of his mind and listened. The words, still strong, still resonant, fell gravely among the people: “*‘We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them, by the ties of our common kindred, to disavow these usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our connections and our correspondence. They, too, have been deaf to the voice of justice. . . .’*”

Yes, justice, the old man mused. There was justice in the country. Teddy, the man with the Big Stick, knew what he was about. The crooks, the grafters, the Trusts—they would all of them feel the Big Stick of America: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

“ . . . to do all other acts and things which INDEPENDENT STATES may of right do. And, for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of DIVINE PROVIDENCE, we mutually pledge to each other, our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.”

. . . and it was worth fighting for, even if you lost an arm, it was worth fighting for. He would do it again if the country wanted it, needed him. He looked around at the solid granite pillars, the dark mahogany doors bearing the titles of those elected by the people to safeguard the people, and looked down at the people, at their flushed solemn faces clustered under the great bright flag that hung above them, shaken by the stern words that formed in the clear warm air and fell slowly among them.

They were all utterly still when Josie finished reading the names of the Signers, in a pause as if they were all for a moment one person—then their lips moved, their hands came up, and the sharp rattle of their applause rose and fell. The doors opened, and the sun came streaming in upon their faces. They heard the hum of the crowd in the Square and an occasional roll of drums, and they began to push out in a thick buzz of talk.

John Cantrell came forward and took his daughter's hand. “That was well done, Josie,” he said.

“It was read,” Francis said, “with the voice of angels.”

Josie blushed. “Thank you,” she said hurriedly. “I think we'd better hurry if we're going to get good places to see the parade.”

“Sit with me on the reviewing-stand,” Francis said. “You're entitled to a place for your share here this mornin'.”

Josie hesitated and looked at her father.

“That's fine . . . fine!” he said. He looked down and saw Marius, alone now, lingering by one of the pillars. “You two go ahead. . . . There's a feller down there waiting to see me. . . .” He avoided Josie's glance and moved away from them. “I'll see you in a little while.” He went quickly towards the head of the stairs, hoping that Josie would be pleasant to Connell, hoping that she would. . . .

"Damn your eyes, Marius!" he said as he came up to his friend, "I could hardly listen to the reading with you there throwing up arguments at me—twitching like a man with the seven-years' itch."

Marius laughed. "So you guessed what I was thinking, hey?"

"Godalmighty, Marius, I read you like a book! I went through an argument for both of us while I was standing up there."

"Sure," Marius said, "I caught the dirty look you gave me. I must've been winning." He laughed again. "How about a quick glass of beer, John?"

The old man grinned. "You old beerbelly, you! I don't want to miss the parade." He looked at his watch. "Well, all right—but a quick one. And while I think of it, don't forget we got a date for the ball-game this afternoon. But no arguments!—this is one day in the year we don't argue."

Marius nodded briskly. "All right, no arguments. Today we'll celebrate whatever liberty and justice we got in this country!"

PEERING out of the windows of the room on the second story of the Bank building, Annabelle Cantrell said: "The parade'll be starting any minute now. The people are coming out of City Hall." She turned peevishly to Phil. "I don't understand why you couldn't have run over to listen to the exercises and realize what this day means to all of us."

Hunched over his book, Phil mumbled some reply.

"Phil!"

He looked up. "Gee, Mother, I know what it's about. It's all we had in school for the last month. Cousin Josie never let up on us—'life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness' all day long. I got sick 'n' tired of hearing it." He came to look out of the window. "Gee, the parade's starting, I guess." He called to the two men who were talking in low voices at the back of the room: "Hey, Father! Grandpa! Aren't you gonna watch the parade?"

The sound of drums and trumpets rose up to them as he spoke. "Hey, look!" he said. "Here comes the cops and the soldiers. Oh boy, do they look classy!"

Over her shoulder Annabelle said: "Come on, Harvey. What are you waiting for?"

But the two men did not answer, and continued their low-voiced talk until she spoke again: "If you don't come now, you'll miss a good part of it."

Harvey turned impatiently. "Listen, Belle, we're talking important business. . . . For Heaven's sake, what if we do miss the parade? What we're saying now is more important to all of us than flags waving and bugles blating away." He said to his father: "Listen, with all that racket we can't talk. Let's go into the back office."

"A fine example you're setting your son!" his wife said.

Will Cantrell hesitated. "I don't know but what we can put off business for a little while, Harvey. We ought to watch the celebration." Yet his eyes turned towards the office door, and when Harvey took him firmly by the arm, he did not resist, but walked towards the office with him, calling back: "We'll be there in a minute, Annabelle." When the door closed behind them, he said: "I still don't see what your hurry is, Harvey. I've hardly had time to consider this deal, and it involves a lot of money. Not only our money, but the Bank money." His hand lying across the edge of the desk trembled almost imperceptibly but continuously, and he peered nearsightedly at his son.

He's getting old, Harvey thought. "Listen, Father," he said, "this is a chance we can't afford to miss, and we can't afford to take our time because we're not the only ones interested in this idea. Connell tells me it's being talked up by the goo-goos down at the City Hall, and there's a bunch of German socialists on the South Side who are pulling for the city to handle the development. That's why we've got to move fast."

"The risk . . ." Will Cantrell murmured. He drew back a little from his son's excited speech.

"Risk? Of course, there's a little risk. I admit it—but what business ever started without a risk? I tell you, this is the Bank's big chance, Father. Either we can be small-town bankers and manufacturers,

struggling along from month to month, and watching more daring men climb to the top and finally lick us, or else we can develop the Bank and the opportunity we've got right now into something really big. I tell you there's a fortune in it—a fortune! No less!" He wiped his flushed face with a crumpled handkerchief.

Faintly the sound of drums and trumpets rose and swelled and died away. "It's a shame to miss the parade," Will Cantrell said absently.

Harvey did not answer. He sat down, unlocked the desk, and threw the roll-top back. He drew out a compact mass of papers. "Now, look, Father, I've been working quite a time up here on this material, and now that I'm finished, I'm going over every bit of it with you right now." He began to sort out the papers. "It's lucky this holiday came along to give us a chance to talk things over without having to bother with business downstairs."

His father hitched his chair forward. "It's the first parade I've missed in forty years." His voice became firmer. "All right, Harvey, get to it. But listen, son, if it's anything the least bit shady, I tell you right now I'm against it, and I'll never give in to you." He laid his hand on Harvey's arm. "A legitimate risk, yes—but anything dishonest, you might just as well burn all this up." His hand moved contemptuously towards Harvey's papers.

Harvey raised his head sharply. "Do you think I'm a crook, Father? For God's sake, do you think I'd throw away our money, our depositors' money? Do you think I'd throw away the reputation of this family and of the oldest bank in town on some wild-cat scheme?" He paused and looked into his father's eyes. "By God, if you don't trust me now, when can I expect you to?"

Will Cantrell said calmly: "All right, Harvey, don't get fussed. I've always been careful, and it's too late for me to change now. Let's get down to cases. . . . And maybe we'll see the tail-end of the parade."

COMING out of the cool dimness of the Indian House bar into the brightness of the sunlit street, he was suddenly afraid that the

parade had already started. He heard the calling of the trumpets, and he said hurriedly to Marius: "I've got a seat waiting. . . . Don't forget this afternoon . . . three o'clock. Thanks for the beer." He hastened along with a dark glow under the weathered skin of his face, and at first people made way for him, but then they were excited about the parade's beginning, and he had to push his way, murmuring continually: "Sorry . . . beg pardon . . . sorry," until the back of the sidewalks cleared with everyone having shoved up to the curbing to watch for the parade, and then it was easier going. He walked quickly, almost trotting, up the deserted back sidewalk past the Bon Ton Shoe Store, past the Scenic Temple, past Frank the Harness Man, past the Persepolis Gas Company, past Feeny's Meat Market, past the Foster Building, past Marcossion's Furniture Store, past Hickey's Bar, past J. F. Cleary & Sons, Plumbers, past the Persepolis Home Loan Association, past the Fletcher Block, past Glantz's Variety Store, rejoicing that the parade had not yet caught up to him even if it had already started, and turning back of the City Hall, saw at last across the Square the raw yellow scantlings of the reviewing stand. "Sorry . . . beg pardon . . . sorry," he murmured a little breathlessly, working his way from the back through the crowd packed along the curb, smelling cigars and violet talcum and fresh sweat, hearing around him the good-natured comments: "Take it easy, Mister . . . what's your hurry? . . . take your time . . . take it easy," and then taking it easy, taking his time, realizing that his heart was pounding and that he wasn't the young buck he used to be, realizing that he was on time and that the parade wouldn't go by without his seeing it—seeing all of it.

He climbed slowly up the stand, saying hello and howdy to people he knew, paused a minute to pass the time of day with Mort Sawyer, the Mayor, who sat swabbing at his forehead as he talked, and finally settled down in the place beside Josie that Francis had kept for him. "Is the prize drill over?" he asked. "I hoped I'd see part of it."

"You might have," Josie said, "if you hadn't gone off with your

crony there." She wrinkled her nose. "You've had something to drink."

"Nothing to speak of, Josie—just a glass of beer to the honor of the country." He leaned across her to say to Connell: "A man can't even take a glass of beer on a hot day without having the temperance girls after him."

Francis laughed. "The drill's just over. You couldn't have seen much from here anyway . . . too far away and the crowd's too thick. I never saw such a crowd. People from miles around must've come into town."

"Look!" Josie exclaimed. "Here they come now!"

John Cantrell craned his neck to see the first movement of the parade. Almost as if they had sprung from the earth, he thought. First there was nothing, and now they're all here—first there was a wilderness, now there's a nation. . . .

The line of policemen, big men in blue uniforms and high helmets, their big shoes brightly polished, carrying their sloping bellies easily before them, marched with dignity to the roll of drums in the band just behind them. Going past, all of them saluted stiffly, all the arms going up at exactly the same time, their heads turned towards the stand, and then in a moment they were gone by.

"A fine body of men," Francis said to the old man.

"Healthy-looking anyway," John muttered, displeased with the rounded bellies and the springless tread of the rank.

Ten paces from the stand, the drum-major raised his baton high and brought it sharply down. Behind him the music tore the dry bland air, and rushed away in a rapid frothy wave. A quick spatter of applause fell upon the bandsmen.

John Cantrell lifted a little in his seat as the sun glinted upon the bayonets of the National Guard companies. He took a quick shallow breath, thinking: all of them with one faith marching along together. One faith—that's what makes them march like one man. With shining eyes he regarded the marching men. "I know you, soldiers," he said to himself. "I know you all, humble men."

The Fourth Company came abreast of the reviewing-stand, and

when the command barked out above the music, the heads all flicked sharply right.

The Band: O COLUMBIA THE GEM OF THE OCEAN THE HOME OF THE BRAVE AND THE FREE THE SHRINE OF EACH PATRIOT'S DEVOTION A WORLD OFFERS HOMAGE TO THEE THY MANDATES MAKE—

Francis leaned a little past Josie, and said heartily to her father: "Sort of brings back the old days to you, does it?" But he saw that the old man had not heard.

The Fourth Company had gone by, and the Fifth was approaching. John Cantrell looked down at the smoothly-moving rank, the young faces set and flushed under the hat-brims. I know you, he thought. Soldiers, humble men, I have known you all, remembering how your rapid fingers tripped the trigger and your shoulders heaved against the gun-carriages while the shrapnel whined and fell from the hot blue sky. Against what enemy do you move now? What foe now reconnoitres against you, scheming to come upon you in the night, to rush upon you by day, to overwhelm and crush you, and send his gun carriages reaching over your bodies to the next hill that rises in the mist and must be won? I fear for you, remembering the battlegrounds—the blood-red grass, the bile-yellow rivers, the corpse-gray streets. I remember you, men of the Fourth, remember you from the diminishing roll-calls of many battles, many hand-to-hand struggles, the bayonets sliding upon each other, the sweat of the locked hand wetting the black gun-stock. "Yes," the old man muttered to himself, "I remember."

He looked out across the Square at the marching rank, and their music moving strongly on the warm dry air came up to him. They marched to him, and as they marched, they seemed to stand, they seemed to wait, and the names rose in his memory, the names of the disabled, the diseased, the wounded, the shattered dead: where are you now? where? muttering Wiley, singing Dow, hopeful Craig, martial Brassbine, grieving Lampkins, lustful Umfreville, doomed Butler—in what Southern fields does your thin dust now mingle with the enemy?

He threw his head back a moment to look at the Fifth Company now going down the Square, and then bent again to the invisible page: O Saunders, Cramm, Paine, Thornley, Connell, Pearson, Freary, Heit, and Dolan, do I not seem to see you marching again beside me, your sweaty faces not speaking the words locked in your throats, nor revealing the shaking of your hearts, nor the deep love of keeping the blood in your body a long time before coming to the thrust of the bayonet, the splintering of the shrapnel, the hot shock of the bullet, and the last easement in the blood-clotted blankets?

The Band: MAKE TYRANNY TREMBLE WHEN BORNE BY THE RED WHITE AND BLUE WHEN BORNE BY THE RED WHITE AND BLUE THY BANNERS—

I remember the loud music of your marching and the single memorial bugle and volley of your going. I have not forgotten, I—

Josie was plucking at his sleeve. "For heaven's sake, Father, what are you mumbling about? Don't you like the way they march?"

"Nothing, nothing . . ." he muttered. "Leave me be."

Francis whispered: "Is he all right? He's been sitting with his eyes closed."

"He's a little tired," Josie whispered back. "He gets so excited at things like this. . . ."

There was a burst of cheering from the crowd as the Persepolis Silver Cornet Band came up. The people on the stand clapped briskly. The music rang quick and hard in the old man's head, and he opened his eyes.

Francis leaned past Josie again. "Those soldiers now, Mr. Cantrell—a wonderful body of men, eh?"

Slowly the old man turned upon him his blank bemused look. "Yes. Wonderful. Yes," he murmured.

Francis saw his eyes close again. "You sure he's all right?" he asked Josie.

Yes, a wonderful body. Yes. Fingerless, footless, armless, legless. Discharged for disability on surgeon's certificate as no longer able to shoulder the carbine, set the tampion, hammer the tent-peg,

heave the gun carriage—Glidden, Parker, Golding, Fales, Moody, Laveran, Lorimer, Foxe, Schever, Shillaber, Tandy, you did not take up again the blacksmith's sledge, the tanner's sleeker, the engraver's burin, the wheelwright's spokeshave, the bookbinder's plow, the glassblower's puntty; you did not again with quick foot force the weaver's treadle, nor with calloused fingers drag the surveyor's chain, nor with certain hand set the mandrel in the lathe, nor with firm wrist guide the froe along the barrel stave, nor with stretched arms hold the plow to the furrow; discharged for disability on surgeon's certificate as blind, your fingers scrabbled on the tool-strewn bench, no longer recognizing the chisel, the gouge, the awl, the file, the rasp, the gimlet; vainly your hands fumbled with the jack-plane, the saw, the nippers, the wrench—in vain, scrabbled, fumbled, and at last drew away to await the pitting of the rust while you sat, your hands hanging between your knees, with blind eyes averted from the burning sun, having given your eyeballs, your blood, your bones to your country. . . .

"Here come the Irish. . . . Ah, the fine boyos!" Francis said as the Hibernian Rifles in dark green half-stepped past the stand. He clapped vigorously, and Josie, catching the downward slant of his eye towards her, applauded with him.

Briskly the Von Steuben Cadets followed after the Irish companies, and the single rank of the Armenian Arshagouny Guards came up the Square.

"Holy Joseph!" Francis said. "Will you look at the baby-blue uniforms? The patriots! . . . There—the second one on the right—that's Sakarian from the ice-cream parlor up on Hamblin Street. Look at the proud strut on him, will you now!"

Josie looked sombrely down at the marchers. "They look like an invading army. Like a foreign army," she said.

Francis looked down quickly at her fresh flushed face. Boldly his hand covered hers. "The Irish, too?" he asked.

She tried to get her hand free, but he would not let it go. "The Irish are too fresh," she said, smiling a little.

His fingers clasped hers tightly. "Aren't we all Americans to-

gether now?" he asked, and suddenly grave, waited for her answer.

"Yes," she said at last. "Yes, Francis," and without resistance let her hand lie in his.

The Band: AND WHEN THE STORM OF WAR WAS GONE ENJOYED
THE PEACE YOUR VALOUR WON LET INDEPENDENCE BE OUR BOAST EVER
MINDFUL WHAT IT COST—

The faces, their names and their places—there were so many I cannot remember them all. But the others? What of the others? I do not remember any more, I have forgotten. Forgotten? What of Captain Blank, Sergeant Cypher, Private Zero? Of them, nothing. It is enough that I have remembered so many. This is enough to remember. It must be remembered, and I have remembered it.

"Remember? Remember what?" said Connell. "Excuse me . . . I thought you were talking to me, to us."

"You've been sleeping, Father—dreaming, and the parade's half over."

"Dreaming . . . yes," John Cantrell told them. Slowly he returned from himself, and looked around at the people in the Square still massed close along the sidewalks, the leaves of the trees over the way slowly turning and fluttering, the flags of the marching men whipping out in the wind. He heard the voices of the crowd murmuring like a wave upon rough sand, and the excited cries of the children, and the music wild and free that rushed upon the air. He raised his head and saw the morning sun wheeling up the cloudless sky. "I've been dreaming," he repeated.

"Here come the floats," Josie said.

The German float depicted seventeen personages of German and American history standing in a semi-circle, the central place occupied by the legendary goddess Germania, who, clad in silver cloth with an eagle surmounted helmet upon her blonde head, held a gilded spear from which hung with intermingled folds the German and American flags. The matched grays from Gallogly's Brewery drew the heavy float along easily, while Germania bowed graciously to the applause.

On the French float General de Lafayette in blue regimentals

and a white wig sat at the right hand of General George Washington by a table on which were strewn maps and papers, evidently plans for their campaigns.

"Not so elaborate," Josie said, "but just as pretty."

Francis agreed. "And what's this one supposed to be?"

"Well, that's the Polish flag," she told him. "And I guess the two men are Pulaski and Kosciusko." Clad in the blue of the Continental Army—the place, Trenton, the time, Christmas 1778—the two men clasped hands, one holding in his left hand the Polish flag, the other, the American flag. They stood in cotton-batting snow.

Up came the float of the Improved Order of Red Men. From a wharf, men, with their faces stained brown and streaked with war-paint, wearing Indian headdresses, prepared to dump a chest filled with tea into the blue crepe-paper waters of Boston Harbor.

Francis got to his feet, and looked down the Square. "Holy Joseph," he said, "there's a hundred more coming. Look at them!"

The rest of the floats went trundling by, and the applause rose and fell and rose again in bursts as each turned into the Square—the Swedish float; the float of Eureka Tent, Number 6, Knights of the Maccabees: the float of B'nai Brith Lodge, Number 37; the float of North Star Lodge, Number 23, I.O.O.F.; the float of Court Savoy, Number 7, Foresters of America—all moving to the music of the Italian Savoia Band. Behind the band marched the Italian societies: the Militari Bersagliere, Marconi and Umberto, Italia Incoronata de Puglia, Carabeniére Reali, and Fratelli Bandiera, each with its bold insignia surrounded by the Italian and American flags.

Josie turned to her father. "Did you ever see such a long parade before, Father?"

He shook his head.

"And there's more coming," Francis said.

John Cantrell nodded, and closed his eyes for a moment. He felt all wrung out. He shouldn't have hurried so after he left Marius. And the sun was hot. He had seen enough of the parade, he wished he were home in his cool room.

THE GANG was pretty tired now of yelling at every float that went by. They stood in restless weary silence while the Italian societies marched by, and when the floats of the business places started to come up, began to argue about leaving and going down to the lots to shoot off dynamite caps.

"Ah, c'mon, there's nothin' to these," Amby told them. "It's about over now anyways."

"Nah, wait a coupla minutes," Al said. "There's gonna be some funny stuff in the parade, too. It was in the *Chronicle* this mornin'."

"Yeah, sure," Louie said, "the best part, too. Don't you remember last year?"

The float of the Combination Ladder Company went by, and after it the float of the A. Zeiger Glass Company, of the Crandall Manufacturing Company, of the United Paper and Stationery Company, of the Persepolis Coal Company, of Gallagher's New Enterprise Laundry, of the Wentworth Dye Works, of the Persepolis Lumber Company, of the Amster Sawmill, of the John M. Tingley Shoe Company, of the Happy Times Confectionery Company, of the W. W. Sheldon Soap Company, of the Coles Chemical Company.

They craned their necks impatiently to see the next division moving up.

"Now watch," Louie Davis said. "Here comes the best part—the horrors. I could die laughin'."

"Go ahead and die then," Joe Cascione said.

The rest of the gang pushed out into the gutter to see Cass's Comedy Band go by, the men dressed like clowns and tramps, beating an assortment of tin cans, blowing madly upon their horns, and cavorting from side to side in the street. Mike Wickett, the drummer, dropped the empty box on which he was beating, tripped over it, and took an elaborate fall. He lay sprawled on the street for a moment, then rose, and with long leaps caught up with the others while his ears caught the sweet reward of Louie Davis's choking laughter.

"Boy, what a dump he took!" Louie said.

After the band straggled the Burlesque Military Company, halting, staggering, limping, wearing great trailing bandages, carrying over their shoulders shovels, pitchforks, brooms, crowbars, and a variety of kitchen utensils.

"Crumby soldiers," Joe Cascione said.

"Aw, you dope," said Amby Tait, "they're supposed to be dressed like that. They're supposed to be funny."

Al Schaeffer said: "Whaddya want for nothin'—Coxey's army?"

"Besides," Louie said, "they don't look much better than that when they join up anyway. Then they get drilled, and get to be good soldiers."

Amby said: "I'm gonna join up when I'm eighteen. . . ."

"Me, too," Louie told him. "C'mon, it's all over now. Let's go down to the lots with the dynamite caps."

"I'd like to drop some in old man Cantrell's pants," Joe Cascione said as they turned up the sidewalk, worming their way through the dissolving crowd.

"Gee, what a sorehead," Al Schaeffer said. "Just because he gave you a bawlin' out. . . ."

They walked on for a while until on Hamblin Street they came up behind Sakarian talking to Lily Marlow. Joe smacked his lips, indicating Lily with a nod of his head and a knowing look. "Some shape! . . . Boy, what I know about her!"

"Yeah, Joe? . . . No foolin' now, what?" they said. "C'mon, tell us!"

"I guess you'd like to know," Joe said.

"You're makin' it up," Al Schaeffer said. "You don't know a thing."

"Oh, no?" Joe looked with satisfaction at their intent faces. "Listen—one night up in Sheridan Park. . . ."

"Believe me, Paulie," Lily was saying earnestly, "there's no one else I would ask. A girl knows who she can trust." She gave his arm a little squeeze. "There's some girls try to take advantage of a feller, but not me. . . ." As Paul started to speak, she went on

hastily: "Of course, there's other fellers, people, I mean, I could go to, but they just wouldn't understand, see what I mean?" She looked quickly sideways at him and saw his dark heavy face, the large nose covered with a film of sweat, and felt a shudder of disgust. "Greasy foreigner," she said to herself, and her full wet lips curved into a winning smile as he turned to her, his adoring helpless eyes swimming in a shining moisture of love and excitement.

"But tell me, Lily," he said. "What could I do?"

"You look wonderful in that uniform," she said. "I never realized before what a handsome feller you are."

His heavy head swayed toward her, he mumbled something, and again felt the promising squeeze of her fingers on his arm.

"Well," she said briskly, "that's how it is. . . . A girl gets to know who her friends are." She nodded her head emphatically. "She knows who she can look to when she needs some help. . . ."

"But, Lily, what? I mean if you tell me . . . ?"

"You mean you will? I knew you would, Paulie. You're wonderful. . . . Only ten dollars."

"Ten dollars? What—? I do not—"

She laughed sweetly at him. "You funny boy, I don't think you heard a word I said."

"Yes, yes, I know," he said eagerly, "Lily, tell me. . . ."

"It's my landlady, that old miser. . . . A girl has to have a new dress once in a while, don't she? I couldn't pay my rent for a couple of weeks, and she's after me every minute."

He looked with dazed longing into her face.

"So I thought: who could a girl turn to if she was in trouble? And I thought of you right off. . . . Because some other fellers would try to take advantage of a girl, but I said to myself: 'There's one man I could trust, and that's Paulie!'"

For a moment he felt entangled. Ten dollars. . . . He thought of the thin roll of bills in the striped candy bag under the gumdrops, but her warm side was touching his and fire swirled along his loins. "Yes, sure," he said. "Ten dollars, I could give you."

She hugged his arm to her. "You're just too wonderful for

words," she said. "Could you . . . could you give it to me right away? I mean I could go to my boarding house and get that Mrs. Kent and slap the money right down in front of her and say: 'There! *Some* people have friends!'"

"Sure, sure," he said. "I'll give you." Then he hesitated, looking down at her apologetically. "You pay back sometimes?" and hurried to explain: "Every mont' I send home money to Armenia to the uncle, aunt, two sisters. . . ."

She broke in: "Why, Paul, I wouldn't think of just taking it like that!"

Heartsick, he watched the frown gather on her full brows.

"What kind of girl do you think I am anyway? . . . Say, a girl has to have some self-respect. Think I'd take money from a man? Of course, if you don't trust me to pay it back. . . ." She drew her arm from his, and paused in her walk as if to let him go on alone.

He was panic-stricken, his face contorted. "No, Lily, no," he stammered. "I know. I trust you. We go to my store now, I give you money right away."

Her hand nestled again in the crook of his elbow. "You're a real American. Better than a good many others I could name," she told him.

"Cert'nly, I'm American," he said, magicked by the word and delighted that she should use it of him. "Pretty soon, too, I get my second papers. I take lessons reading and writing."

"Well, you talk wonderful, I must say," Lily said. "Consider-in' . . ."

They were at the store. He fumbled in his tunic, drew out the key, and went forward to unlock the door. She turned and surveyed the street where people slowly sauntered back from the parade on their way home to dinner.

A gang of boys went slowly past, staring at her, and one of them said suddenly: "Hey, goin' to the park tonight?" Then they all whooped and ran up the street.

"Dirty fresh kids," she muttered to herself, and then as the loaded Hamblin Street trolley went by, she saw a hand wave to her

from the rear platform, and recognizing Jack Smith, she waved eagerly back. She turned and went into the store where Paul Sakarian was already fumbling at the candy counter.

As she approached him, he held over the counter to her a wrinkled roll of bills. "Ten dollars, Lily," he said.

"B'lieve me, Paul," she said loudly, "I'll never forget this as long as I live. There's not many would be as good as you. And you'll get it back too. Every cent of it. Every cent," she repeated, trying to convince herself. She wanted to reward him somehow. She looked around the store. "This is a nice place you got here. Very nice." She nodded her head in businesslike fashion.

He came out from behind the counter and looked at her longingly.

"Lots of room, too," she said. She went to the back of the store and opened the door to the back room. "Plenty of room," she said, and went into the dimness.

Wonderingly he looked after her, and then followed her. He heard her whisper: "Shut the door."

When he turned, she was close beside him. "Lily," he mumbled thickly, and then she was in his arms close against him, her warm lips upon his, and her body rubbing in a long slow movement against him. Frantically he clasped her, his lips slipping on her face down to her neck and pressing against the opening of her dress at the throat.

Then, smoothly, she was out of his arms.

"Lily, Lily," he implored her, but already she had found the door and was out in the store again.

When he came up to her, she said: "You're sweet, Paulie."

He would have clasped her again, but she drew back, patting her hair into place. "Somebody might come in, you naughty boy."

"Lily," he said, "I give you money all the time, you marry me. I have to marry American girl. You, Lily."

"Why, Paul!" she said, "I never thought you felt that way about me. You certainly are sweet. But I never even thought once of getting married." She was anxious now to escape, thinking that

she had paid him perhaps a little too much.

"I give you all the money I make, you marry me," he told her, his eyes gleaming, his face twisted again with his love. "Come to park tonight with me, we see fireworks, yes? I bring you five dollars more if you meet me." He had her hand and would not let it go.

She considered. "Yes," she said at last. "All right, Paul. I'll meet you corner of Congress and Osborne at nine o'clock. All right?"

"Corner Congress and Osborne," he repeated. "Yes, yes, Lily."

"Goodby," she said, going towards the street, her body swaying before his lovesick sight. "Goodby, Paul."

"Goodby, Lily," he said. "Tonight. . . ." He went slowly towards the backroom where the scent of violets lingered.

WHEN they got to the corner of Bridge and East Main, Al Schaeffer looked back over his shoulder at the City Hall clock. "Hey, it's ten after twelve," he said. "I gotta beat it home to dinner."

"You comin' to the ball-game this aft, Al? I'll call for you," Louie Davis said.

"I'm goin' home, too," Amby said. "So long."

The gang broke up, and Indie Whipple turned back towards his house, wondering if his father would be drunk today as he was nearly every holiday. If he was, Indie would have to listen to him carry on about how the nigras were still slaves to the white folks while his mother laid it into him for his boozing. When he came into the yard, overgrown with rank burdock and littered with pieces of scrap that his father picked up in the city-dump, he paused to listen. But the cottage was quiet. In the kitchen he saw his father slumped over on a chair, a bottle half-full of whiskey on the scarred table top. "Hello, Pa," he said.

His father pulled himself up in the chair and looked at him blearily. "It's you again," he said.

"Ma home?"

"Ma! Ma!" his father mimicked him. "Why don'tcha quit bawlin' for yer ma?"

"Who's bawlin'?" Indie said. "I'm just askin', that's all."

"Don't give me any of yer lip." The man fumbled at the bottle on the table, poured a drink into the chipped cup, and gulped it down.

Indie went to the icebox and opened it.

"Yer ma's workin' out today," his father said suddenly. "She'll be bringin' somep'n to eat when she gits home."

"Well, gee, Pa, I'm hungry—when'd she say she'd be home?"

"I dunno. But she's on'y workin' half a day."

"She musta left somethin' for me to eat," Indie said. "She always does."

His father looked away from him, and Indie suddenly had an idea: "Didn't she leave some money to buy dinner with?"

"No," his father said.

"She always does when she ain't gonna be home," Indie said. "Leaves it right here in the corner of the icebox so I'll find it."

"Well, she didn't this time," his father said, but Indie knew he was lying.

"You took it," Indie said. "You spent it for booze, that's what."

His father lurched to his feet. "What if I did?" he yelled. "Go out an' earn yer dinner the way I did when I was yer age. Go git yer workin' papers, you're fourteen years old, and bring a coupla dollars home for yer board instead a runnin' wild around the streets."

Indie said: "Where'd a kid like me git a job?"

"Why, he's askin' me where he'd git a job! . . . Look fer it, look fer it. When I was yer age, I was workin' in the tannery, gittin' four dollars a week."

"And I s'pose you spent it for booze," Indie said.

"I'll kill you," his father said. "I'll beat you for blood." He came forward heavily.

Indie's hand, groping behind him, found the doorknob. He said: "Go t' hell, you dirty ole drunkard," and at once slipped out into the entry and into the sunlight of the yard. He turned around and waited, but his father did not come out.

So now again he would have to go begging for food—go up and wait around one of the feller's houses until he came out and then ask him to get him a sandwich or something. Two weeks ago Dave Bandler had asked his mother for something to eat for Indie, and she had come to the door and called him in: "C'mere, Hindie, so I'll make a sandrich for you," and had given him a glass of milk, too. But he didn't want to go begging any more. He wished his mother would get home, he was hungry.

Last week, sitting behind the old barn where Dave Bandler's father kept his junk, the gang had been talking, and Dave had told them about a book he got in the public library—some sailors had got shipwrecked on a desert island in the Pacific Ocean and had built a cabin there and had gone hunting and fishing all day long and found plenty to eat. After a long time they were rescued. Indie had said that he wished they could all sail away to an island like that, and never be rescued even, and they had all laughed at him. But he had kept thinking about it a lot. That would be a good life—on an island like that. Even if he were alone he would not care. Maybe some day, he told himself, he would find a place like that and live alone, away from everything and everybody. Alone and free.

When a hand touched him, he leaped away in fright, thinking it was his father, but at the same time he heard his mother say: "What you dreamin' about, Frankie, standin' here in the hot sun? You wanna git sunstruck?"

He said sulkily: "Pa's drunk again. He chased me out."

After a moment her voice came high and strained: "Where'd he git the money? Not what I left for dinner?"

Indie nodded, looking past her, seeing the sun strike up from the tin cans over on the dumps.

His mother's breath came hissing through her teeth. Her full lips were drawn back, and a purple tinge came into her lustrous coffee-colored face.

"Don't fight with him, Ma," he said quickly. "He'll killya."

But she was already started for the house, and he followed after her, groping at her arm while with quick automatic gestures she fended him off, muttering: "I'm gonna split his head open!"

Indie felt a sickness gather in his belly. "Jesus, Ma," he kept saying, still grabbing at her arm, "Jesus, Ma. Don't fight him. C'mon uptown. C'mon, we'll eat uptown."

But she rushed ahead and slammed the kitchen-door open, and stood for a moment, her wide solid body filling the doorway. Indie, peering past her shoulder, saw his father's dull look slowly draw to a focus.

"H'lo, Daisy girl," he said thickly. "Howsa fat liddle pigeon t'day?" He chuckled, but his eyes, cold and cautious, withdrew from his words. "Have a liddle drink . . . a liddle bed maybe, huh?"

Indie sensed the convulsive jerk of his mother's body as she plunged into the kitchen. "I'm gonna killya," she was moaning, "I'm gonna cut y'heart out!" She pivoted to the shelf above the kitchen-sink, and her voice sharpened to a scream. "The las' time, the las' time!" She wheeled away from the sink, and Indie saw the bread knife in her hand.

"No, Ma! No!" he yelled, his voice torn from the sick tension in his belly.

She was already leaping towards the table. The man rose clumsily, with both hands shoving the table against her. She side-stepped and came around it, the knife already plunging furiously at his face. As the knife came down, he grasped at her wrist, but missed it and seized the blade instead. Indie saw the bright spurt of blood from his father's fingers and wrist, heard his mother's sharply expelled breath as she pulled her body together to draw the knife back, and plunge again. Then his father's other hand, balled into a fist, drove against his mother's forehead just over her distended eyeballs. She lurched forward, thudding into her husband like a solid sack, and both crashed down.

His father clamped his other hand over the blood-spurting

wrist, and his frightened eyes found Indie's. "Frankie boy, the doctor . . ." he mumbled, and turned his head to be sick on the floor.

His heart pounding, Indie ran dizzily out into the sunlight, still seeing the bodies of his father and mother lying in blood and filth upon the floor. But as he ran, into his mind flashed a desert island where the blue water broke in a long foam-edged curve upon the shining sand and he was running naked to throw himself into the sea, washing away the stains of blood and filth in the pure water of loneliness and rising clean and free. Free.

"You shoul'da come to see the parade, Pa," Dave Bandler said. "It was classy, b'lieve me. There musta been more'n a thousand soldiers marchin'."

His older sister Sadie said with affected niceness: "Will you be so kind as to pass the bread, please, Dave?"

"Will you be so kind . . ." he said, pursing his lips into a dainty pout. "'Smatter, you got an arm ain'tcha? Reach for it, and save the fancy talk for your feller, Isadore."

"There!" Sadie said, "dja hear how he talks to me, Pa? Like as if I was nothing! . . . And you keep quiet about Isadore Marcosson, or I'll slap your fresh face!"

Mrs. Bandler came in, her face flushed, carrying a jar of pickles. "Look," she said, "'way down the cellar I hadda go. Davie couldn't go, Davie's too busy, hah?"

"Gee whiz, Ma, why didn'tcha ask me? I'da gone for you."

"And you oughta hear the way he talks to me, Ma. Like I was one of those little bums he plays with."

Mrs. Bandler turned to her husband. "You hear, Morris, what Sadie says? So why don't you say something?"

Her husband put down his fork and looked up at her. His hand stroked with kindness his short pointed beard. Dressed meticulously in dark broadcloth, he sat easily, yet proudly at the head of his table, and his bright dark eyes smiled. "What should I say?" he inquired gently in Yiddish. "A boy is like a young goat. He runs

around. He pushes his nose into every place where it doesn't belong. When you want him, you can't find him. When you don't want him, he's under your feet. He runs, he doesn't look, he bumps his head. And then, at last, after he bumps and bumps"—his smile broadened and he looked around as if there actually were a young goat in the room smacking its foolish little head against the solid walls—"then, at last, he learns."

"Don't talk to me of goats!" his wife said. "When I want you should teach Davie a lesson how to behave, how to have some respect, so you don't have to talk to me like an old farmer about goats!"

Sadie said: "All this talk, and he still didn't pass the bread!"

Dave grinned broadly at his father, and picked up the bread-plate. He rose from his chair, and extended the plate across the table while he bowed deeply from the waist. "Will your Highness, the Queen of Abyssinia, take a slice of bread from her humble slave?"

Sadie snatched a piece of bread from the plate, and her mother giggled. "Listen, like a book he talks!"

"As I was sayin'," Dave said, "when I was interrupted by her Highness . . ."

"You shut your fresh mouth, Dave Bandler," Sadie told him, "or I'll give you a good slap in the face!"

"Listen to her," Dave said, "she thinks she's Teddy Roosevelt with the Big Stick." He looked to his father for appreciation, but his father gave him a little shake of the head, and Dave said quickly: "Okay, Sade. . . . But no foolin', I been trying to tell you for the last hour, it was some peach of a parade, with all kinds of floats and about a thousand soldiers I bet."

"So what about the soldiers?" his father asked.

Dave caught the dark gleaming eyes upon him, and in them a look he recognized and rose to, a look of challenge. Sparring for time, he waited for his father to make the thrust, himself alert for the counter-stroke. "The soldiers looked classy, that's all."

His father said gravely: "Nice uniforms they wear, I know. But

you think maybe their guns are made of tissue paper? They shoot pretty flowers maybe?"

Mrs. Bandler put cups of tea before them.

"Well, gee, Pa, listen," Dave said. "There has to be soldiers."

"Has to be, Davie? Why?" The hard white hand paused upon the smooth beard. Dave fixed his eyes on the hand. He knew if he said something his father approved of, the hand would begin to move again upon the beard. It seemed to him now as he watched it, while the ideas raced through his head, that nothing so far in his life had made him feel so good as to see that hand move in grave consideration of what he had said. "There has to be soldiers," Dave argued, his own hand ruffling his curled brown hair, "to protect this country from its enemies."

His father's hand did not move. "What enemies, Davie?"

"Why, other soldiers from other countries, Pa. In case, they come to attack us."

"From France? From England? From Germany?" his father said quickly.

"N-n-no, I don't think so," Dave said. "But how about protecting us from enemies in our own country?"

"We have police. Enough is enough," his father said.

"But suppose there were more enemies than the police could conquer?" Dave was watching the hand all the time, but it hung weighty upon the beard without moving.

"When there are more enemies than there are police," his father said, and sat forward in his chair, "then the police, the soldiers, are the enemies."

"I don't get you, Pa. Whaddya mean the soldiers are the enemies?" It was like playing chess with his father and finding, as he did all too often, that he had beaten himself. While he looked at his father with his bewilderment plain on his face, Sadie sniffed in contempt of him in his defeat, and he saw his father's hand leave the beard and the fingers grasp the handle of the teacup. To Dave the gesture said: "You're still just a little boy."

His father said: "In Russia I remember when the Cossacks came

to our little village, riding wild to take the young men to serve their turn in the army. Sometimes even they took children, snatched them from their fathers and their mothers, and sent them far away deep into Russia where the children grew up, forgetting they were Jews, forgetting their parents, forgetting everything but that they were soldiers of the Tsar, even forgetting they were human beings and becoming wild and savage like the Cossacks, coming sometimes to hurt, to kill, without knowing it, their own people." He paused to sip his tea. "Our people have many stories like this," he said.

"In our city," Mrs. Bandler said rapidly while her husband waited with a courteous and tolerant look, "in our city the Cossacks came too. I remember my older brother—it's a long time already but I remember from when I was a little girl—my mother knew the Cossacks were coming, and my brother was old enough to go to be a soldier.

"So before they came in the spring, all day long my mother made him drink Epsom salts—all day long. He didn't eat hardly a thing, but Epsom salts he drank till he got so thin his clothes didn't fit him no more. He was fine, big—you should've seen him—with rosy cheeks, but with the Epsom salts he got all dried up, his face was yellow, his eyes looked like mud in his face." Her face took on a look of quiet pain. "Even now it hurts me to remember. Ach, the oldest in our fambly—the only boy."

"So what happened, Ma?" Sadie said impatiently. "So what happened?"

"It didn't do no good. The Cossacks came—he's a sick boy my mother said, a soldier he'll never make. But just the same they took him—he was weak like a baby, he couldn't stand up even—they threw him on a horse, they tied him on. My mother, my poor mother, she begged, she fell on the ground, she kissed the officer's feet, but he walked away from her. Quick he jumped on his horse, he hollered to the Cossacks, and they rode away with my brother. And we never saw him again. My mother tore out her hair—in handfuls, I saw with mine own eyes—she scratched her face till it

was covered with blood, on her head she threw ashes. When my father came home—he was a traveling man, all over Russia he traveled selling cigarettes, tobacco for a big company—he said: ‘Enough! Pack up! To America, we’re going!’” Sadly she shook her head, tasting with her tea a remembered bitterness as of Epsom salts.

“It was a good thing you came,” Dave said strongly. “Things like that don’t happen in America.”

His father said: “Is there a Jewish family doesn’t have a story like this? Listen: my father came to this country without his thumbs. Yes, without his thumbs. When my grandfather knew that the Cossacks were coming, he took my father out behind the barn—my family were farmers, y’ understand—and he said to my father: ‘Lay your hands upon the chopping-block,’ and when my father spread his fingers out upon the block, my grandfather picked up the axe and one! two! he cut off the thumbs.”

Sadie said: “Well, all I can say is thank God we’re in America.”

“Yeah,” Dave said, “and that we’re Americans.”

His father’s hand was at his beard again. “My son, we are not Americans,” he said. “We will never be Americans.”

“Well, gee whiz, Pa, why aren’t we Americans? You got your citizen papers. And I was born here, wasn’t I?”

“The world is too small for us Jews, Davie,” his father said. “We cannot stay in one place. And if we do not go, we are made to go. It is our fate to wander until the Messiah comes to free us and bring us at last to the God whom we, wandering, seek. No, the world of man is too small for us, and the world of God is not yet ready for us. It is God and his word alone that we Jews love, and the world hates us and exiles us because we do not value the things they value, nor love the things they love.”

“What things, Pa? Tell me,” Dave said.

“What the world loves, my son? The world loves God’s creation, but not God. The world loves itself. But the Jews love God and the word of God alone. . . . So we are not Russians, we are not Germans, we are not Americans. We belong to no country

but the kingdom of God. And we are his children, not America's." His eyes glowed while he spoke, and he seemed to be looking beyond them all, beyond the walls that sheltered them, beyond the music of life that rose to the windows from the streets, over and beyond them all he looked, as if he yearned upon the very battlements of Heaven. They sat unmoving while he gazed, until suddenly his glance flashed upon them, and his teeth showed very white over his beard as he smiled.

"Did you hear, Dave?" his mother said. "You should only remember what Pa says." She rose. "Come, Sadie, let's clean off the table, so maybe we'll go by the park for a walk this afternoon."

Dave held his chair. "Listen, Pa," he said. "You're makin' a mistake. This country is different from any other one the Jews ever been in. It's—well, it's like Miss Cantrell, my teacher, says—it's the land of opportunity for everyone. It's a free country, and we're free too."

"Yeah," Sadie said. "Free so's every ignorant dirty mick and wop in the streets can holler 'dirty Jew' and 'Christ-killer' when Pa rides by on the wagon. And throw stones at him. That's being free, I suppose."

"So what?" Dave said. "You just said they were ignorant, didn'tcha? They have to learn, that's all." He turned to his father. "And even if you don't feel free, I do!" he said defiantly.

"All right, Davie," Morris Bandler said mildly. "So feel free. . . . And maybe some day you'll understand what I told you." He got to his feet. "A game of chess, Davie?"

Dave nodded. There was something he wanted to say to his father, but the words would not come. And suddenly he felt it was no use. Against their memories bitter as mineral salts, he knew already that he was throwing himself in vain. "I'll get the board," he said.

His mother came hurrying in from the kitchen. "It's your friend, Dave—the nigger boy, Hindie," she said. "He's waiting for you in the entry, so tell him he should wait outside in the yard."

Dave went out to the dimness of the back stairway where he said

with forced heartiness: "Gee, Indie, you're early—I just finished dinner, and I'm gonna play a game of chess with my father, so why don't you get the rest of the guys, and I'll meet you later out the park, huh?" He peered down at Indie who, without answering, stood awkwardly at the bottom of the short flight of stairs. "Whaddya say, Indie? Okay?"

Indie spoke as if from far away. "Dave?"

"Yeh, what?" Dave said. "Gee, you must be deaf or somethin'." He could hear his mother hovering behind him.

"My father and mother's in jail," Indie said in the same remote voice.

Dave heard his mother take in her breath sharply. Then she spoke in a loud brisk tone as if she had not heard Indie. "Davie, tell Hindie to come up. So maybe he'd like a liddle bite to eat." Over Dave's head she said: "Come up, come up, you shouldn't be afraid." She nudged Dave. "Tell him to come," and then she went back into the kitchen, Dave hearing her say: "Take out from the icebox the meat, slice up a couple pieces bread, Sadie."

In shame for his friend, Dave said: "C'mon, Indie, ole kid, my mother's getting somethin' ready for you. C'mon," and Indie began slowly to climb the stairs, his head bowed on his chest, his feet dragging.

On the kitchen table there was a plate of cold meat and potatoes, a dish of apple sauce, and a cup of tea sending up a thin vapor. Mrs. Bandler was putting a couple of slices of bread beside the plate, and Sadie was just going out into the parlor.

"So sit down, Hindie, what you waiting for?" Mrs. Bandler said. "Sit down, have a bit to eat, you'll feel better."

Indie sat down slowly, picked up his fork and began to eat while Mrs. Bandler said: "Dat's the way. Eat up, you'll feel fine," and she came and stood behind him a moment and patted his shoulder one or two brisk little taps.

And then Dave heard a terrifying sound. At first, he did not know what it was, and then he realized that Indie was crying, crying with deep racking sobs that seemed to be torn from his chest.

Mrs. Bandler motioned Dave out of the room, and he went quickly, glad to escape from the cry of anguish that rose and fell and broke in the sunny room while his mother's firm hand smoothed and smoothed his friend's bent back. . . .

WHEN Joe Cascione came into the kitchen, they were already eating. His father looked up from under his bushy brows and said in Italian: "Late again. Always late."

Joe slid into his place between his twelve-year-old sister, Elena, and his oldest brother, Pete, who was twenty-two. He looked around the table, and said: "Some family. . . . Can't even say 'hello' to a guy."

Leo, his other brother, older by some four years, lifted his head from his plate. "Maybe you'd like a great big kiss, too."

"Ah, shut up," Joe said. "Where's Ma?" he asked Elena.

"She don't feel very good. She's layin' down in her room."

"Well, don't I get somethin' to eat? Jes's, you'd think I was a dog or somethin' just because I'm a few minutes late."

"All right, hold your horses," Elena said. "I'll get it for you." She got up. "Somebody'd think you was a cripple." From the gray enamel pots on the stove, she filled a plate with lentil soup and another with veal cutlets and set them down before him. She went back to her place.

"You're some smooth article, kid," Leo said out of the corner of his crooked mouth.

Joe looked across at him. "Whaddya mean? Can't a guy ask for somep'n to eat without gettin' picked on?"

"Sure," Leo said, "sure. We don't mind your eatin' even if you don't bring a nickel into the house, but you come in with your mouth wide open to be stuffed. You don't bother to tell why you're late, we tell you Ma is sick again—and this is what gets my goat—you don't even bother to ask how she is, if she's comf'table, if the doctor's been here— Oh, no. Not you. You have to stuff your belly, that's all you give a good Goddam about."

"Why don't you lemme alone?" Joe said. "Jes's, you're always

pickin' on me." He gulped some water and got up. "I'll go in and see Ma now."

"Don't bother," Elena said. "She's sleeping—she's been sleeping all morning, so she don't miss her sweet little bambino."

"Then whaddya crabb'in' at me for?" Joe said triumphantly to Leo. "If she's sleepin', how could I see her? Some brain you got."

He sat down again, and did not reply when Leo said: "One more word outa you, and I'll push your ugly little mug in."

"Quiet!" his father said, "when Mamma is sick, quiet I say."

"Okay, Pa, take it easy," Pete said. "Ma'll be all right. Don't worry. Doctor'll be here soon."

His father mumbled rapidly: "Doctors, priests—they're all alike. Fakers, money-grabbers."

"Listen, Pa," Elena said, "when the priest comes to see Ma today, will you be quiet, and let 'em alone?"

"What's he coming for?" Massimo Cascione heaved his big body straight in his chair, and rubbed the bald spot in the middle of his graying hair. "Who asked him?"

"Don't get excited, Pa," Elena said. "Ma asked me special last night to tell him to come."

"Don't let me see him then," Massimo growled. "And don't let Mamma give him any money either."

"No," Pete said, "we got better uses for our money." He turned to Joe. "Howja get the blood on your sleeve, kid?"

Joe's heart leaped. He bent over his plate and said without looking at any of them: "Blood? What blood? Whatcha talkin' about?"

"The blood on your sleeve," Pete said.

"Oh, that?" Joe said. "Hadda fight. Some country hick got fresh with me, an' I hadda give him the ole onc-two."

"Yes, you did," Leo said. "An' I suppose you let him wipe his bloody nose on your sleeve, huh?" His crooked mouth widened into a grin. "I'll bet he gave you plenty."

"Oh, yeah?" Joe said. "You shoulda seen the peeper he went home with."

"Fighting? Again?" his father said. He rose from his chair and approached Joe who cowered down with his arm crooked up before his face.

"Jes's, Pa, don't hit me," he said. "It wasn't my fault. . . . You hit me, an' I'll run away! I'll run away like Guido. Don't you—" He stopped abruptly. "Ma's callin'," he said.

They heard a moaning from the bedroom, and Elena said: "Papa! You woke Ma up." She got up hastily, and went out.

"You know she gets all excited if that little stinker starts yellin'," Pete said to his father.

Massimo went back to his chair. "Dirty little ruffian," he said in Italian as he sat down again. "Fourteen years old, you're big enough to go to work and bring a little money into the house instead of running around fighting in the streets."

"Far as he's concerned, every day's a holiday, a Fourtha July," Leo said.

"And listen, Joe," Pete said slowly, "don't you ever let me hear you talk about runnin' away like Guido. You gotta understand what this family's tryin' to do, and you gotta help, see?" He laid his hand on Joe's arm. "This is Independence Day all right, but who's independent? Free? Are we? No . . . only the bosses are free."

"Okay," Joe said. "Then get some dough like them, and we'll be free too."

"It ain't the dough we want," Pete said. "It's bein' our own boss that's what we're pullin' for."

Massimo leaned over the table and said excitedly: "The bankers and the priests, the lawyers and the politicians—they are free. They have all the money. But the poor people—pah! Slaves to do the dirty work for the rich and the powerful. Slaves, not freemen."

"Sure, Pa," Joe said eagerly. "Sure, you're right. . . . You know why I was late? Because that old soldier, you know that Cantrell they made all the hoopla about last Decoration Day, he stopped me and the other fellers in the street, and begins to spiel to us how money is nothin', and how you have to be good and sweet all the

time. . . . 'That's how to be a Namerican,' he says. 'Don't try to get money,' he says. 'Just be a good little boy.' Yeah, and"—he leaned towards his father—"he said to ask you about Garibaldi. What Garibaldi fought for."

Massimo's eyes lighted. "Ah, Garibaldi!" he exclaimed. "In Italy, in the old days, my father fought for Garibaldi. He was shot—here in the side—but he kept on fighting with Garibaldi to be free of the priests and the politicians. He fought to be a free man. . . . But we, we do not have to fight. A little money is enough to buy our freedom. Yes, a few hundred more dollars in the bank, and we will buy our own land, good fat land that a man can grow roots in." His face creased into a wide and tender smile. "Ah, that will be the day!" he said.

"Yessir," Pete said, "and then no more slavin' in the foundry. The hell with that. We got our own place, our own farm, and we're free. We're our own boss. No more bull from the foreman, no more sewer-diggin' for the old man." His eyes dreamed. "A farm with our own vegetables, our own grapevines, our own house. Boy, workin' for yourself on your own land, that's bein' free, the way Pa always said. That's the life for me."

Excitedly, Massimo jerked his big head at his oldest son. "Si, si," he said. "That's right, Pietro. A new life, a good life."

"I'd like to cut my foreman's heart out the day I leave," Leo said.

Joe gestured at Pete. "Some pipe-dream you got there!" he said. "You talk like that old man Cantrell." He shook off Pete's hand upon his arm while his voice rose. "You'll starve to death on your land. But not for me, boy, I ain't gonna live on no farm. I'm gonna stay right here and get in the dough, the big dough. Get other guys to work for me while I give the orders. That's what the big guys do in America. And me, I'm as good as the next guy. Me for the big dough."

"You all through?" Leo said. "Then wipe yourself!"

Pete's hand tightened on his younger brother's arm. "That's the way Guido talked. Listen, Joe,"—he twisted the boy's body toward him—"for fourteen years this family has taken care of you. You're

gonna start payin' back some day. After you put in your share of money into this family, you go cut your throat for all I care. But if you go like Guido did, I'll find you no matter where you are, and I'll cut you to pieces." He picked up the fork from his plate and put its tines against Joe's throat. "You hear me?" he said, and drew the tines down Joe's neck, "I'll cut you to pieces."

"Ow, you're hurtin' me, Pete. Jes's, whaddid I do? Leggo," Joe said, and wrenched away.

"You gimme the right answer," Pete said, "or I'll. . . ." His face was stiff with anger.

Elena came in. "Pa! Pete!" she said. "I'm scared. I don't like the way Ma's sleepin' so deep. Her face is white as paper." She threw her hands up to her face and began to cry.

Pete sprang up while his father stared in bewilderment.

"Elena," Massimo stammered, "what? . . . what? Tell me. . . ."

"I'm goin' for the doctor," Pete said. The fork clattered to the floor, and the door slammed behind him.

Leo leaned across the table, and slapped Joe so hard that he knocked him half off the chair. "Sure, tell us some more to live, smart Aleck," he said. "Ma's dyin', now you c'n go live in the gutter where you belong. . . ."

A little later while Doctor Hinckley and Elena were still in the bedroom, Father Leporello, portly and composed, came into the kitchen from the entry, wiping the sweat delicately from his nose with a large white handkerchief. Leo's face in profile was at the window, and Joe, looking sullen and frightened, was staring at the bedroom door. Massimo raised his head, and nodded dazedly. The priest turned to Pete who was close behind him, sweating from his run through the streets to the rectory. "I will not go in now," he said. "Wait till the doctor comes out, and we will hear what he has to say."

From the bedroom murmured the low grieving voices of the doctor and Elena. She came out once, poured hot water into a pan, and went back quickly. Their eyes followed her, begging for a word, but her set mouth, thin-lipped, the corners turned down,

frightened them, and they let her go without speaking to her.

A few minutes later she reappeared in the doorway. Massimo started forward, but Elena with a stiff little motion of her hand said: "Not you, Pa. . . . Father Leporello."

The priest settled his collar, and walked slowly to the door.

"She asks for the priest," Massimo said. "Not for her husband, but for the priest." He smiled vaguely. "Poor, foolish Mamma."

Then Doctor Hinckley came out, and they all rose respectfully. He spoke while his fingers set his cuff-links together. "It's deep coma. The coma of diabetes. D'you understand?" he went on sharply as their blank faces untouched by his words seemed to lean closer in mute inquiry.

Pete said after a moment: "Di'betes, yes. We know." He watched the doctor's thin pink lips forming the words precisely.

"She hasn't been keeping to her diet list," Doctor Hinckley said. "And I warned her," he said a little primly, "I warned her to be very careful. . . . She's been eating everything, hasn't she?" He turned towards Massimo.

The old man was still smiling with a vague tenderness. "Mamma, she eat. Sure, she eat," he said, his smile broadening as if to say: "Foolish doctor, must we not all eat?"

"Well, that's just the trouble," the doctor said.

"But, Doc, I mean, Doctor Hinckley," Leo said, "this coma—what is it?"

"I'm sorry to tell you"—he hesitated and then went on quickly, but clearly—"it's the end." His eyes slid past them. "She may come out of it for a while, I've given her an injection . . . but I doubt it." With impersonal pity he watched Pete's face slowly crumple before him.

"You mean she's dyin', Doc?" Leo said, his wry mouth working.

"I'm sorry. . . ."

Massimo gripped his son's arm. "What . . . what? What is it?" he stammered, his eyes dilating upon Pete's contorted face.

Leo said: "Mamma's dying, papa mio."

Without a word the old man gripped the doctor's lapels tight

and drew him close, looking into his eyes.

The doctor nodded gravely.

Then from the bedroom Elena's sobbing transfixed them. They all stood unmoving. The priest came out. He went to Massimo and laid his hand upon his shoulder. "Go to her, my son," he said. "Pray for her soul. She is free now—free of all pain, free of all suffering in the arms of Jesus Christ, our Saviour."

Dazedly, Massimo shuffled towards the bedroom door.

"Free?" said Pete, "free?"

LOUIE DAVIS's father bowed his head over his plate. He said: "O Lord, we thank thee that thou has given us this day our bread. Amen."

"Amen," said Louie and his mother.

"'Men," said the baby in the high chair.

His father broke his bread with delicate fingers. "Louis?"

"Yes, Father?"

"I didn't see you in the City Hall."

"Gee, Father, I forgot." Louie ate quickly, not tasting his food, tensing for his father's next words.

"Look at me when I speak to you, Louis."

Louie set his eyes on his father's forehead slanting back into the smooth-brushed sandy hair.

His father went on: "I think—in fact, I'm sure—you promised me you'd listen to the speeches in the City Hall today. . . . Can you explain why you did not?"

"I told you, Father, I forgot."

"That is no explanation," his father said. He busied himself a moment with the meat on his plate, cutting it into small precise squares. "Why did you forget, my boy?"

"I was with the fellers," Louie mumbled.

"I thought so. But I've told you many times that you should put your duties before your pleasures. Have I not, Louis?"

"Yes, Father."

"And your companions—who were they?"

"Who were they?"

"Yes, Louis, you understand me. Their names, please."

Louie did not answer at once.

The baby gurgled, patting her mashed potatoes, and Cora Davis said: "Does the little sweetums like her potaties?"

Her husband turned towards her, "I beg your pardon, Cora?"

"Yes, Arthur," she murmured, and turned to her plate again.

"Louis?" his father said, "I'm waiting." Delicately, he lifted a square of meat to his mouth, his thin rosy lips taking it daintily from the fork without touching the tines.

Louie felt the sweat gathering in his armpits. "Well," he mumbled, "there was Amby Tait 'n' Dave Bandler 'n' Al Schaeffer 'n' Joe Cascione 'n' Indie Whipple. Just the fellers I always go with, Pa—I mean, Father."

"A gang of young hoodlums," Arthur Davis said briskly.

"Gee, Father," Louie said, "they're all right. They're the fellers I go to school with."

"Ah, yes, I know. But I have told you many times that one is known by the company he keeps." He set his fork down and said softly: "I have told you many times, my boy, that your mother and I are anxious, very anxious, for you to go with boys of your own kind and station in life—real American boys. You have heard us say so many times. Have you not, Louis?"

"Yes, Father." Louie swallowed with difficulty.

"And now, my boy, be good enough to tell me what you and your—ah—friends did when you should have been attending the patriotic exercises."

Louie said quickly: "Why nothin', Father. We just hung around waiting for the parade to start."

Little Margaret whimpered, and Mrs. Davis hastily picked up her glass of water and held it to the baby's lips.

"Thank you, Cora," her husband said. He turned his regard again upon his son's bent head. "I think, Louis, that you would do well to look at me when I am speaking to you."

Louie raised his head and looked at his father with hot eyes.

"You would also do well to change your expression."

Louie lowered his eyes.

"That's better," his father said. "Now you may tell me what you did before the parade started."

"Gee, Father, I told you," Louie said, his voice breaking a little.

"I am sorry to say, Louis, that you have not told me."

"Honest, Pa—Father—there's just nothin' to tell!"

"Indeed? . . . Perhaps, then, you can explain your actions around Mr. Cantrell's automobile a few minutes before the exercises started."

"Oh, that?" Louie said. "We were just lookin' at it, that's all."

His father's bland expression did not change. "You made no trouble, of course?"

Suddenly remembering, Louie said: "Why, we had a few words with Phil Cantrell, but it wasn't anything. Nothin' at all. We were just there about a second, and then Mr. Cantrell came around the car and chased us away."

"Ah," his father said, "chased you away."

"Yes, but we didn't do anything. Honest, Father, we didn't."

"You did not happen to remember, Louis, that Mr. Cantrell is my employer? That my position as bookkeeper at the Iron Works depends upon his good will?" The rosy lips formed each word slowly. "You did not pause to think that our freedom from worry and care, this food you are eating, the clothes you are wearing come from my salary as a well-regarded employee of Mr. Cantrell's? No, you did not think of these things. Did you?" His fingers held Louie's wrist lightly encircled, tightening with each phrase upon the boy's skin.

"No, Father," Louie said.

"Could you," his father asked, "support this family if I were to lose my position?"

"No, Father."

"But," said his father, now gently grinding the skin of Louie's wrist, "if you had remembered what we have tried so hard to teach you: if you had listened to Judge Woodward's fine speech at the

exercises, you would have not got into such mischief as might have seriously endangered my position and the safety and freedom of us all. . . . Suppose," he said, watching the tears gather in his son's eyes, "suppose Mr. Cantrell had called an officer instead of handling the matter himself? Suppose, in court, I had to identify you as my son? What do you think Mr. Cantrell's feelings towards me would have been?" Again his fingers rolled the loose skin on Louie's wrist.

Louie winced. "Gee, Pa, you're hurting me," he said.

"Arthur!" his wife exclaimed.

Her husband turned his light eyes upon her. "Please, Cora," he said. He turned again to his son. "'Pa?'" he said.

"'Father,'" Louie said.

"I do not mean to be hard on you, my boy. Some day you will thank me for the pains I take with you now. Won't you, Louis?"

"Yes, Father." It's over now, Louie thought. I'm safe now. His thoughts raced ahead to the afternoon sunshine of Sheridan Park. He saw himself sitting with the gang on the grass watching the movement of the ball players over the diamond, and joining in the cheerful chatter of the crowd. "Yes, Father, I will," he said eagerly.

And then his father's look caught his almost carelessly, and he said: "There's another thing I wished to speak of, my boy."

No! Louie thought, no!

But his father was going on: "Your mother tells me that she is missing some change from her purse. To be exact, a quarter. She suspects, naturally, the colored wash-woman, Mrs. Whipple, who worked here yesterday. So do I. But I do not wish to accuse her unless I am certain, and I . . . well, I would like to be certain."

Mrs. Davis rose hastily from her chair, her eyes averted. "Time for little Margie's nap," she said, cooing towards the child. "So I think I'll—"

Her husband put his hand upon her arm. "Cora," he said, "this is important enough so that you should stay, I think. . . . You don't mind?" His eyes flicked at her, and she sat down again.

"No, dear, of course not," she said, "only I thought the baby. . . ."

"The baby seems quite content," Arthur Davis said. "And now,"—his fingers again rested upon his son's wrist where a chafed redness appeared—"Louis, I am waiting for your answer."

"What answer?" Louie said loudly. "You didn't ask me anything yet."

The light eyes widened upon him. "I do not like your tone, Louis. Lower your voice."

"Yes, Father."

The even voice went on: "Naturally, Louis, I expect a truthful answer from you. Did you take the money from your mother's purse?" Lightly his fingers gripped Louie's wrist. "Did you, my boy?"

Desperately, Louie's eyes fixed themselves on the statue of the girl with the grapes on the little table behind his father. He blurted: "No, I didn't. . . . What quarter? . . . The wash-lady musta took it. . . . I didn't take any quarter."

His father gave his wrist a gentle jerk. "Ah! You are lying, Louis. I know you are lying because the wash-woman was not here yesterday. You are the only one who could have taken the money. . . . Come now, my boy, confess." The pink mouth opened into a little smile. "Confession is good for the soul, you know."

Louie said: "All right. Yes. I took it. I took it. . . . All the other fellers, their fathers give 'em spendin' money. You never gimme anything. . . . You just pick on me all the time." He turned towards his mother. "Ma!" he said, "ma! . . . don't let him."

Cora Davis saw the fingers tightening remorselessly upon the wrist. "Arthur," she said, "after all . . . the first time." She met her husband's look, but stammered on: "I know he'll never. . . ."

The eyes widened and brightened upon her as she faltered to a stop. "My dear Cora, exactly. The first time. . . . Also the last. This is a Fourth of July he'll remember as long as he lives."

She replied incoherently: "Yes, I know . . . it's a game to you. You love it. . . . Cat and mouse. . . . I know." She arose, and

picked Margaret up and hurried out of the room.

Louie was terrified by his mother's stammering words. "What you gonna do to me, Pa?" he said. "Not wallop me?"

"What else?" the even voice asked. "'Spare the rod and spoil the child,' you know. . . . Come with me, Louis." He rose from his chair, still holding firmly his son's wrist.

"You takin' me to the cellar, Pa? . . . Please don't take me down there. . . ." Louie's voice broke and he sobbed: "I'll be good. I promise. Father, Father, I promise."

"Come with me, my boy," Arthur Davis said. He jerked at his son's arm, and Louie, wiping his nose on his sleeve, followed him obediently, as if trapped by the calm light eyes.

In the musty dimness of the cellar his father led him to one of the center stanchions, and said: "Wait there, Louis."

Numb, dry-eyed now, Louie stood until his father returned from the darker corner to which he had gone, carrying a length of rope and an old razor-strop. He said to his son: "Let down your knickerbockers, Louis."

Louie's hands fumbled slowly at his belt.

"Hurry up," his father said, "just let them drop. Hurry."

When the knickers dropped, his father caught Louie's hands quickly together with the rope and tied them to the stanchion. "Face the post," he said, and Louie turned slowly. At the first cut of the strop he cried out, and his body leaped with agony. He threw himself sideways straining at the rope, and cried out: "Lemme go! Lemme free!"

The strop rose and fell, lashing his turning thighs, and he screamed again and again, until throwing his head back, he saw in the dimness such a grin of maniacal pleasure on his father's face that his heart contracted in strangling terror. "Lemme free!" he screamed. A wave of blackness gathered beyond him in the cellar, and swiftly mounted towards him. Gladly he plunged into it.

AMBY TAIT was surprised when he got home to find that dinner was not yet ready. There was a good smell in the kitchen as he

came into it, but his mother was not there, and he went on into the empty dining-room where the table was not even set. Then he heard voices in the parlor, and he went through the bead portières to find his mother and father and his seventeen-year-old sister Annie sitting all together on the red sofa and talking in low tones. Amby saw at once that his mother had been crying—her eyes were red and puffy—and his father looked solemn and a little sad. Annie's thin and usually pale face was flushed, and she was smiling gently. He was puzzled, and when they all greeted him quietly, he said: "A fine thing—a fine state of affairs. Here I come home with an appetite big enough to eat all the stew and the pot with it"—he was echoing his father, and Mike Tait grinned at him—"and you're sittin' around here in the parlor like you was havin' a wake for Paddy's pig."

"Now, Ambrose—" his mother began, but his father poked him, and said:

"You got the gift o' gab, Amby, my boy—a fine politician you'd make."

"Or a priest," his mother put in quickly.

"Aw, Ma, you startin' that again?" Amby said. "Seems to me that's all you say mornin', noon, and night." He saw the hurt in his mother's look, and went on quickly: "Gee, Ma, I didn't mean nothin' by it. You know a feller just don't decide a thing like that all at once. Gimme a little time."

"I say it for a special reason today, Ambrose," Margaret Tait said. "For your sister's had the call."

Startled, Amby looked at his father who was nodding his head solemnly, and then at Annie.

"Yes, Amby," she said softly, "it came to me last night."

Amby could only stare at her.

"Tell him about it, Annie," her mother said. "I could hear it a thousand times and never weary of the hearin'."

Annie said shyly: "You'll believe me, won't you, Amby?"

"Believe you?" Margaret exclaimed. "Would he be doubtin' God himself who sent you the call?"

"Well, it was late," Annie said. "I don't know what time, and I was sound asleep. But in my sleep it seemed to me I heard a voice calling me from far off, very faint and far away, but with a heavenly sweetness to it. The very way it said my name, 'Anne, Anne,' made it seem like a blessing."

Her mother, her eyes shining, crossed herself, and clasped her hands on her breast.

"Then," said Annie, "I opened my eyes and looked towards the corner where my little praying stool is below the crucifix, and I saw a soft golden light there, all misty like fog under a lamp."

"It coulda been moonlight," Amby said abruptly. "Gee, Annie, you mean I'll never see you again when you go into the convent?"

"Sh-sh!" said his mother.

". . . and then the mist cleared away and I saw Saint Anne, my own saint, beckoning to me with her white hand. 'Come to me, my child,' she said, and I stretched out my hands to her. Then I fell asleep again, the sweetest sleep I ever had in my life, I think, and in the morning when I woke up I felt so strong and fresh. . . . I could hardly wait for Ma and Pa to get home from the parade to tell them."

"Oh, it's the blessing of Jesus our Saviour come to all of us!" her mother cried. She clasped Annie to her.

Mike Tait leaned over and patted her on the shoulder. "Come now, Margaret," he said, "get a hold on yourself. It's a wonderful thing has come to our girl, but there's no need to wear yourself out."

"Yes, Mike, you're right," his wife said firmly. "We'll be goin' to see Father Reagan this afternoon, Annie and I, and I'll not be lookin' like an old biddy."

"That's the way to talk," Mike said.

"But there's just one thing," she said, turning to Amby.

"What is it, Ma?"

"I want you to go to Communion this Sunday."

"Well, but gee, Ma, I just went last Sunday. How many times

you want me to go anyway? . . . I bet I got a place wore out in front of the altar I been so many times."

"Now, Mar'gret, leave the boy be," Mike Tait said. "If you had your way with him and us, you'd have us all flyin' up to Heaven in one o' these flyin' machines."

"That's no way to talk now, Mike," his wife told him.

"Ah, come now, Mar'gret," he said in a wheedling tone, "the good God put us here on this earth because he meant us to live on it. Would you be puttin' your foot in the crack of Peter's gate before he's willin' to have you? Straddlin' between earth and Heaven like a lopsided duck?"

Amby burst into laughter, and his mother said: "You've got a slippery tongue, Mike Tait." But she was smiling.

"Slippery, is it? It's drier than a wagon shaft in the summer sun, it's drier even than the tongue of Mike Sheehan, my cousin, marchin' in the hot sun with the runnin' sweat on the outside and a parchin' drouth on the inside." He winked at Amby. "Why, if I'd had my boy at my side, I would've sent him to the nearest saloon for a can of beer, and then I would have stepped right out into the street, and stopped the whole parade. In a ringin' voice to be heard for several city blocks I would've declared: 'Halt! I bring the cool growler of foamin' ale that will relieve the dried-up intestines of patrolman Mike Sheehan and put new life into his hot and swollen feet!' Indeed it would have been a godsend to—"

Annie said suddenly: "Oh, I'll miss you, Pa, and your funny talk—what'll I do without you and Ma and Amby around me?" She burst into tears, and threw herself on her mother's bosom.

Over the girl's bent head, Margaret Tait waved them out of the room and smoothed her daughter's dark red hair. "There, there, my lamb, little bride of the Saviour, there's nothin' to grieve for—nothin', nothin' at all. Husha, husha."

After dinner when Annie and her mother, dressed in their best, had left for Father Reagan's house, Mike Tait and his son sat about the dining-room table, feeling good with the weight of the corned-beef and cabbage inside them.

"Some excitin' morning," Amby said at last while his father put a match to his pipe.

"Indeed it was," Mike Tait agreed. He took the pipe from his mouth and sighed. "It's a wonderful thing about your sister Annie," he said, "and I would not begrudge her to Holy Mother, but just the same it's a hurt to a father to see her go."

"Me, too, Pa," Amby said.

"And I would not be upset if you wasn't to take holy orders," his father went on. "Of course, it's a wonderful thing, but I wouldn't be forcin' myself to it, Amby boy, just because your mother is wantin' it so strong."

"That's just it, Pa," Amby said. He pulled his thin body up straight and leaned across the table to his father. "You don't know how she's after me all the time—talkin' about it till my ears are ringin', and leaving holy books in my room for me to read, and urgin' me to prayer every minute of the day."

"Well, Amby, make allowances for your mother. . . . There's not many have the true religious heart she has. But I tell you again, it's not a thing you want to force on to yourself. If the call should come to you—well, all right. Good! But if it don't, I'm the last man in the world to put you to a vocation, even a priest's, if you don't want it." He hesitated. "There's other things I had maybe in mind for you."

"Had you, Pa?" Amby said eagerly. "What would they be?"

"Well, Amby, here I been a car-knocker for near twenty years, and it's been a comfortable livin' for us. . . . There's a good little bit of money in the bank, and there's my insurance policies, if somethin' was to happen to me—"

"Gee, Pa, don't talk like that. . . . You know Ma prays for you every day, you know she's always lightin' a candle for you."

"Yes, I know, son, but I can't be expectin' to live forever." He rubbed the stem of his pipe down the side of his reddish brown face and across his upper lip. "But workin' on the railroad ain't like pickin' daisies in a field. . . . There's men get killed every day."

"Gee, Pa, why you talkin' like this? I don't like this kind of talk," Amby said.

"No more do I, Amby, but I'm talkin' to you like a man now. . . . You're goin' on fifteen. . . . You don't have to be scared to talk of death. A man faces up to things howsoever ugly they might be. You hear me? Death's a terrible thing, but you got to look boldly into the face of it, holdin' your courage clinched in both hands so's it won't slip away." He leaned forward and tapped Amby's knee with the stem of his pipe. "You hear me, Amby?"

Amby's eyes shone. "I heard you, Pa," he said, with the glow of his father's words warming him, "I hear you, Pa, I'll not forget. Never, Pa."

"It's a good heart you have, Amby," Mike Tait said. "But I want you to have the strong heart, too."

"I will, Pa, I will," Amby said solemnly.

His father relighted his pipe. "Well, I've been turnin' about like a dog with the fleas. I've yet to tell you what's on my mind. . . . There's really two things. The one is what I started out to say a while ago. What would happen if somethin' should happen to me? . . . The money, insurance and all, would be none too much if it was goin' out and nothin' comin' in. An' I wouldn't want you to have to go out to work before you finished your schoolin'. You're just beginnin' high school, but I would want you to go on to college, and not be endin' up with a pair of hands like that." He laid his heavy scarred hands upon the table. "It's hands like that built this country, but they're not meant to hold it. . . . No, Amby, the men that hold the money and the power are the thinkers, not the diggers. You follow me, Amby?"

"I'm with you, Pa," Amby said. Holy Joseph! he thought. College! Me!

His father was speaking again. "So I asked m'self: 'How in the name of Heaven, Mike Tait, are ye to make an industrial magnate out of that lump of a boyo you've got?' And the answer came to me, that a good start would be the sendin' of you to college. For it's a free country, there's opportunity for all, I told myself, and

my boy's as good as the next, and if he's meant to be a millionaire, then it would be the father and mother of all stupidity to hold him back. Hey? What do you say to that, John Jacob Astor Carnegie Vanderbilt Tait?"

Amby grinned at him, and his father tilted his chair back. "But it'll take money to send you to college. So, here's the nub of this tale, Amby. Yes, and the rub of it, too."

"What, Pa? Tell me. . . . You got me dizzy!"

"Well, I'm thinkin' of quittin' the railroad. . . . Yes, givin' up the safe, sure job and all. Up and quit, that's what I'm thinkin' of doin'." He made a short cutting gesture with his hand and said quickly: "Because I'm thinkin' of goin' into business!" He sat up to enjoy the look of bewilderment on Amby's face, and then leaned back again. "Yes, Amby—me, Michael Mannering Tait, your old man, Prince of Erin, and King of the Car-knockers, is goin' into business. Oh, not right this minute, o' course, nor tomorra, nor the next day, but soon. . . . And mind you, Amby, not a word of this to your mother at all. It's a great secret I've put on your back this afternoon, boy, but you're not to peddle it. You're just to help me carry it, lighten the load for this ould bent back," and in high spirits he sucked his lips over his teeth so that he looked like a mumbling old biddy.

Amby grinned. "Maybe you ought to go on the stage instead, Pa."

"An' why not, I'd like to know?" his father said. "I could do a jig and a jump as would bring all the pennies in the gallery rollin' and rattlin' on the stage around me!" He lowered his voice and, grave again, said: "Ah, Amby, it's done me good to talk to you. It's the doin' that must come now, and it's the doin' that counts. . . ."

"But listen, Pa," Amby said, "you haven't said what business, or when, or anything about it."

"Oh, my boy, that's the easy part. . . . When it comes to business, there's a million ways to put your money out, it goes away so easy you'd think it was greased, and only two ways to get it

back with a little honey smeared on it—and them two ways are work and worry, worry and work. . . . But the point of it is that your Uncle Joe the carpenter wants me to start a little contractin' business with him. He's been after me for a long time now with your Aunt Kate whippin' him to the hunt. He's close to Councilman Francis Connell from the Fifth Ward who's supposed to hold City Hall in the hollow of his hand and play with it as he likes, and who will be givin' us some o' the city business. Not alone out of the goodness of his heart, Amby boy—I see that lily-white hand of Connell's held out often and often if he should turn a good job our way, but your Uncle Joe is willin' to risk it, an' I am, too. I think I am, but it'll depend on your mother's word at the last and when the time is ripe, maybe in a couple of months, maybe less, an' I put it to her in my fearful peep, I expect you to raise your ringin' voice in my behalf—in behalf of all of us, Amby lad. You'll be doin' that for your feeble ould man, now, won't ye?"

"Gee, Pa, you bet I will. . . . An' some day it might be Michael M. Tait & Son, hey, Pa?"

"Nothin' could make me happier, Amby boy. Nothin' in the whole world than for us to be doin' a job of work together."

"Me, too, Pa. I'd rather work for you any day than be a priest or a general or anything."

Mike smiled, and brought his chair down to the floor. He took his tie and collar from the sideboard. "An' that's enough for t'day. . . . It's a holiday, it's the Tait Declaration of Independence, that's what it is, and it is fittin' we should celebrate. I know what your vote is, so I'll cast it along with mine. The ball-game at the park? . . . Right?"

Amby jumped up.

His father said: "Button up your jumper before you go out, Amby lad. Let's be good decent citizens. . . ."

As Al Schaeffer came up the stairs, he saw his mother sitting on the porch, rocking back and forth. "H'lo, Ma," he said, and turned sideways, trying to get past her and inside the door before she

could see where Joe Cascione had ripped his shirt in the fight.

But she called him to her in her clipped speech, and said: "Now what've you been up to?"

"I was down at the parade, Ma."

"I know that, you lummoxy," she said, "but you've been up to mischief I know. I can tell by the way you tried to slip past me. Out with it, Albert!"

He smiled sheepishly. "Gee, Ma, you can always tell, can't you?"

"Of course I can, and don't try to butter me up. . . . Now what've you been doing?"

"Well, I had a fight, that's what."

"Oh, you had a fight? . . . Well, for Heaven's sake, how many times have your father and I been after you not to fight? What was it this time?"

"Well," Al said, making himself comfortable on the top step and leaning his back against the post, "you know Joe Cascione, that Eyetalian feller in our gang? . . . Well, he started pickin' on Louie Davis, tryin' to take a quarter away from him, so I tried to stop him."

"Well, did you?"

"Sure I did, and gave him a bloody nose, too."

"That's a fine thing. . . . Now I suppose he'll have the Black Hand down here with knives to cut our throats while we're sleeping."

Al laughed. "Gee, Ma, I can't tell when you're foolin' or not."

"Never mind," she said. "You go get washed for dinner, and put on a clean blouse. . . . If your Grandpa's napping, you be sure you don't wake him, you heavy-footed thing. . . . Did you see your father this morning?"

"No, ma'am, I didn't," Al told her. "You want me to go fetch him?"

She sighed. "No. . . . He'll be along soon. Most likely he's met up with John Cantrell and is talking politics. I never saw such a man for political talk. He'd rather talk politics than eat. And such crazy politics too. Socialism!—nonsense!" she said.

"You'll wag that loose tongue of yours once too often, my fine boy," she said to Marius a few minutes later as he came puffing up the steps, his face flushed with the heat and the sweat shining on his broad brows, "and you'll come home with it in your hand."

"Tut!" he said. "You see before you a man worn out with celebration."

"And full of beer," she said as he kissed her cheek.

"Well, one or two," he admitted. "I met up with John Cantrell after you'd gone home. . . . Papa all right, wasn't he?"

She nodded. "Just the same I don't like to leave him alone."

He sat down where Al had just been sitting and rubbed his back against the post. "I itch," he said.

"Then it's the hives again," she told him, "and it's punishment for your carrying on at the City Hall. . . . Imagine a policeman having to shush you!"

"And it's supposed to be a free country, too." He looked at her from the corner of his eye.

"You'll get no argument out of me," she told him, "not with the dinner drying up on the stove."

He laughed and got up. "Albert home yet?"

"Yes, and he needs some talking to. He had a fist-fight, but it was in a good cause so far as I could gather. Just the same. . . ."

"All right," he said. "Didn't get hurt, did he?"

"No. Claims he gave the other boy a bloody nose."

As they went in they heard the murmur of voices from Heinrich Schaeffer's bedroom, and Emily said: "I suspect he's telling Grandpa about his mighty victory. . . . Go get your dirty face washed, and bring him down with you."

Al had been telling his grandfather about the parade while the old man in the Morris chair, leaning back comfortably against the pillow tucked behind his back, took little puffs from the cigarette that he was not supposed to smoke because of his weak heart, and blew them gently through the window-screen. In the little conspiracy between him and his grandson, it was Al's duty to flush the cigarette down the toilet bowl, his grandfather having com-

mitted himself to full confession if Al were ever caught by his parents with the smoking butt in his hand.

So Al had one ear cocked for his parents' footsteps in the hall while he told his grandfather about the parade. "And after the soldiers came the floats. The German float was a peach, Grandpa."

"Yess," his grandfather said, "I read about zis float in z' *Chronicle* zis morning."

"Well," Al said, "it sure was a wonderful sight to see all the people in that parade and the big crowd watchin' it. A better parade than last year's even."

"Yess," his grandfather said, "it iss goot to see a people all feeling the same goot t'ing, feeling zat one idea ties zem all together. It iss too bad zat zese people do not realize zat it iss zeir right to have zis feeling every day instead of only once or twice a year. Eh, Albert?"

"Gee, Grandpa, I don't quite catch what you mean," Al said, frowning in his effort to understand.

His grandfather said: "I will try to explain zis to you, Albert. . . . Listen."

But Al suddenly darted to his side. "Quick, Grandpa, the cigarette!"

His grandfather gave it to him, and said: "Shut z' door when you go out, Albert: say I am resting—ja, say I am resting." He put his white head back, smiling, hearing in a moment a rush of water in the bathroom, and then a moment later his son's voice saying to his grandson: "Hurry up, Albert, dinner's ready, and I want to get washed up, too. . . ."

Later, while they were waiting for his mother to bring in the dessert, Al said in answer to his father's question: "I was tellin' him about the parade, an' he said that people all the time should have the same feeling they have on Fourtha July. I couldn't catch what he was gettin' at."

His father leaned back and cleared his throat. "Grandpa's a pretty wise old bird, Albert. He meant that people are not happy all the time, because they're worrying about a job, or scraping money

together if someone gets sick, or going off their heads with grief if their bank fails. He means that people worry so much about making a living that they can't be all the good and fine things they're capable of being. But if people didn't have to fret and worry so about getting their bread and butter, then they'd feel good all the time. Yes, and act good too."

"Well, in this country," Al said heavily, "everyone's got a chance to feel good if he's willin' to work—there's a chance for all, my history teacher says."

"Tut! It's nonsense . . . moonshine! It's Josie Cantrell who told you that, and she's echoing her father who's a stubborn old mule with a good heart. But—you listen to me, boy—in a country where money is everything, a good heart is not enough. No, sirree, a good heart is not enough."

"Certainly not," said Emily Schaeffer, setting down the pudding dish, "a good heart and hard work."

"Yes, work—hard work that breaks the heart, that's what you mean."

"Nonsense! Hard work never hurt anyone, nor broke a heart either. Why are you such a softy about people working?" She sat down at her place.

Marius said to her: "You don't know what hard work is—you think maybe it's like the work you saw on your father's farm? Out in the open all day long, plowing, planting, reaping, following the earth around the sun? Or do you think work is standing behind a counter selling corset-strings to fat and foolish women? . . . Wake-up, Emily—hard work is the digging for coal, the blasting for iron, the slow back-breaking labor with the hands and the legs and the back, it's the racking of the muscles, and straining of the bones—and at the last, a man, a workingman, for all his hard work, is thrown out on the junk-pile like a piece of rusty metal that's grown old in its service and must be replaced." Automatically he took the plate of pudding which his wife handed him and set it down without looking at it. ". . . And if a workingman complains, what happens to him? If he joins with other working men

to protect himself from the bloodsuckers that wring him dry and then throw him out, what a hullabaloo goes up! They run bawling to the government about the sacred rights of property, the court calls out the troops, and the troops obey orders—they shoot down their countrymen with a sure eye and a steady hand—the damn fools, they don't know they're shooting into their own bodies every time they pull the trigger."

"Don't be so wrongheaded, Marius." Emily laid her spoon down and faced him across the table. "It's the people who are at fault, not the government. . . . There are people who are mean and vicious who'd take advantage of people for their own selfishness under any kind of a government."

Marius was rapidly spooning up his pudding. "More moonshine," he said. "You take this Haywood case out there in Idaho," he said. "Those miners had sense enough to band together to fight for decent hours and better working conditions, to fight for enough money to feed their wives and kids—and what happened? The mine owners yell bloody murder, they arrange an assassination, they put Haywood, one of the great labor-leaders of this country on trial, and hope that if they can convict him, they'll convict every worker in the country, so that a laboring man won't dare even to look at God Almighty, his boss, without being flung into some black hole of a prison that his boss owns."

"There's many a boss," his wife said, "who began with nothing and worked hard and took every advantage the country offers those who'll work, and pulled himself to the top. . . . There has to be some on top."

"Yes," Marius said, "that's all you see, the ones on top. How about the ones they're sitting on?"

"With enough gumption," his wife said sharply, "they could be on top, too."

"You think that's as far as a human soul can hope to rise?" her husband said. "To sit on top of those he's trampled down, clutching to his fat paunch his bags of gold?"

"Tut!" Emily said, "cheap oratory! You've got a nice little paunch yourself."

"God!" Marius exclaimed, "if that isn't just like a woman! A man might just as well try to argue with the wind!" Furiously he said: "You know what the history of this country is? It's a history of bloodsuckers, cunning enough to wring their fellow men dry and make them like it! Filling them up with talk about freedom, and opportunity, and such fancy words like that old windbag, Woodward, down at the City Hall today. And they stood there, the sheep, with their mouths open feeding on the wind, thinking they were getting a solid bellyful—bellyful of gas, that's what they got."

Al giggled, and his mother said: "Now, Marius!"

"Go on—laugh!" he said, turning towards his son. "You go tell Josie Cantrell in your history class that you know all there is to know about the history of this country. You tell her it's a history of bloodsuckers and their fine accomplishments. First, they used up the trees and the animals. Then they used up the brush and the grass. Then they used up the soil. They ate it all up, they drank it all up. And they got fat, but they weren't satisfied. No, they looked around for more to feed on. And there was nothing left but human beings, so now they're eating human beings. And when you eat human flesh and drink human blood, then you're a cannibal, you're a monster!" He stopped and glared at them.

"I think Judge Woodward is closer to the truth than you are," his wife said calmly.

Marius stood up abruptly. His face purpled. He said: "Why, you—you! . . ." He turned and tramped across the room. The door crashed to behind him.

Al looked at his mother. "Gee, Ma!"

"He'll get over it," she told him dryly. "He always does."

SHORTLY after noontime a cool breeze bearing clouds before it came down from the hills into the city. In the houses people finished

their dinners, and the clatter of dishes came from the pantries. The streets were deserted, but from far away occasionally a firecracker popped. Men sitting on their piazzas and front stoops watched the sky and said: "Hope the ball-game ain't rained out this afternoon." "Funny not to hear factory whistles at noon-time," some of them said, and boys said to their sisters: "Gee, I wish it was Fourth July every day," and teased them until the girls went complaining to their mothers, saying: "Ma, he's teasin' me again. Tell him to stop teasin' me." For a couple of hours the town snoozed in the sun, scratching itself now and then, lifting its head restlessly, murmuring a little in its sleep, and then it woke up. Here and there on the streets boys appeared, and the sharp irregular popping of firecrackers ran up and down the sidewalks. Old men just waking from their naps yawned and stretched, and the women just finishing the dinner dishes sat down with a sigh and a thump, while the men on the piazzas rose and went inside to put on collar and tie again.

Little by little the music of the city's life rose again on the warm summer air, and the white fleecy clouds stayed still in the sky. Young girls in flowered dresses and big hats sauntered along the streets twirling their sunshades, and the young men who walked with them put their fingers inside their collars to ease their stiff grip, and took off their straws to wipe away delicately the sweat that gathered on their brows. Smaller girls, linked together, skipped along the sidewalks, and the boys trailed them, throwing firecrackers at their feet. The trolleys began to rumble along the tracks, and once in a while an auto went down the street raising clouds of dust. The boys yelled back and forth across the street: "Hey, goin' up to the park? Goin' to the ball-game?" and ran races to see who'd get to the entrance of Sheridan Park first.

Harvey Cantrell stopped his big Peerless at the curb in front of John Cantrell's house, and went quickly up the walk.

Josie, answering his ring, said: "This is a surprise, Harvey," and led him into the sitting-room. The shades were drawn against the heat, and a light fragrance drifted in the room. She sat down,

looking cool and pretty, under the portrait of her great-grandfather in his 1812 regimentals.

She motioned him to a chair, and he said: "I know I ought not to be bothering him today, Josie, but is your father home? It's something important. About the Bank."

"If the Bank were in flames, you couldn't see him now," she told him. "He's tired, he could hardly eat his dinner, and he's asleep now, thank Heaven. What's so important at the Bank that it can't wait till tomorrow? You ought to take a holiday once in a while, Harvey."

"I know, Josie," he said, "but I can't help it. There's something drives me all the time."

"Well, let it wait till tomorrow then," she told him. She made a gesture of impatience. "Why should you worry so about the Bank? It's doing as well as always, isn't it?"

"Yes, but that's not enough, Josie," he told her. "In business there's no standing still." His face got solemn. "In business there's only one direction, and that's forward. When you're standing still, then you're going backwards. Sounds funny, doesn't it? But it's true." He fidgeted and said: "D'you mind if I smoke, Josie?"

It would be all right, she told him.

He lighted his cigar, and watched the slow smoke curl up. "Yes, Josie," he went on, "nowadays a business man has to push every day, including holidays." He puffed at the cigar. "Because the country's beginning to boom the way it was meant to from the beginning and there's thousands—yes, millions—to be made."

"Do you have to have millions, Harvey?"

"It's not that alone, Josie. It's something hard to explain. But it's the working, not the getting, that's important to me. I mean it. When I was a kid of about fourteen, Mother and Father took me East one summer to the sea. I learned then what people mean when they talk about riding the wave. It was surf-bathing, and I watched the other kids go out into the water and wait for the wave to roll up on them, and then turn and plunge with the wave as the crest broke and be carried high up on the beach. So I tried it too, and the

first few times I misjudged it and just floundered while the wave went on and away from me. But then I got the feel of it, the rhythm of it came to me, and I tell you, Josie, I was a happy kid. I was in time with something deep and powerful. I could feel the wave inside me as well as outside." He smiled at her, and drew upon his cigar.

Josie watched him, pleased with his quick nervous talk, and sensed in him a quality of the breeding and manner that were her father's.

He began to speak again. "So I've known for a long time now, Josie, what riding the wave means. I can feel this country working up to a wave, a long powerful wave—I feel it, I've got it timed as I had when I was a boy, and I'm setting myself to ride with it for the pleasure it gives me. . . . I don't want to flounder with sand in my teeth while it mounts up and rides beyond me." He went on in a lower tone: "That parade this morning—I didn't see it. Belle thought it was funny for me to be talking business with Father instead of watching it. Even Father thought it was strange. But I was marching just the same—maybe marching to a deeper beat than most of the paraders could hear. . . . I'm not bragging, y'know," he said abruptly.

"No," Josie told him, "I know you're not bragging, Harvey."

His glance went to the portrait above her. "There's a rhythm in this country that I'm marching to. I've got to go in time with it, feeling its strength upon me, and maybe adding to it my own. Maybe," he said. "All I want is to be free to feel it."

Josie liked the mingling of strength and humility in him. Out of his abrupt jerky speech, his plunging words there seemed to come to her the beat of life, of American life.

As if he had guessed her thought, he said: "There was something else happened to me. . . . The year I got out of college Father gave me a year abroad. I had a lot of fun, did a lot of silly things that young fellers do when they're on their own with plenty of money to burn, but all the time I felt funny. Sort of lost. It wasn't the strange places and people, and I wasn't homesick for

the folks either. And then one day it came to me. I was sitting in some little woods outside of Florence, and I looked up and saw some high fleecy clouds like the ones outside now, and I got the hot heavy smell of the pines around me, and suddenly I knew what the matter with me was. I was homesick all right. But not for people. I was homesick for America. Yes, America. Not for any one place, any one city, but homesick for all of it. I was out of the parade, and I wanted to be back in it. And you know what I did then? I got up and came home. Just like that." He smiled at Josie.

"I know how you felt, Harvey," she said. "It's the same thing Father feels when he tires himself going to G. A. R. encampments and Fourth of July parades and all. . . . I think you're much like him anyway."

He was pleased. "That's a real compliment, Josie."

He relighted his cigar, and they sat in silence for a time.

"What d'you think, Josie?" he asked finally. "Shall I wait longer for your father?"

She looked at the clock. "It would be too late now anyway," she told him. "He and his friend, Mr. Schaeffer, are going to the ball-game this afternoon. It's a yearly custom for them, and wild horses, never mind business, couldn't hold him back. Besides I don't think he'll want to talk business today. He almost had a row with Fred Curtis this morning when Fred tried to."

"Curtis, the real estate man?" Harvey asked sharply. "What did he want? D'you know, Josie?"

"No," she said, "but he plagued Father."

"I wish I'd been there," Harvey said. "That Curtis has got wind of something in this business—I don't know how—but if he gets in the way of it, I'll run him into the ground if it's the last thing I do."

"It must be a very important matter, Harvey, for you to talk that way."

"It is," he said. "Important to all of the Cantrells. . . . The biggest thing maybe that this city has seen in years. But I need your father's help—need it bad."

"Well, I hope you won't get it," she told him promptly. "Don't you realize he's sixty-five? That he's retired? I don't want—"

"What's age got to do with it, Josie?" he broke in. "He's got the shrewdest business head in town. Why shouldn't he—I mean, I can ask him, can't I?"

She shrugged. "Don't worry, he'll be only too glad to listen to you. This past year he's got so peevish and irritable with nothing to do that he's driven me nearly wild sometimes. But I hope he says no."

Harvey got up and smiled down at her. "Well, we'll leave it at that, Josie. If you'll just tell him I've been here, and that I'd appreciate it if he'd drop in at the Bank tomorrow morning?"

"Yes, I will," she told him.

"And you'll tell him it's important, will you, Josie? It really is."

"Don't worry so, Harvey! I'll tell him." She rose.

"Don't bother to come to the door with me," he said, and then to her surprise leaned forward and kissed her lightly on the cheek. "You've done me a deal of good this afternoon, Josie," he said, "thank you," and went out quickly before she could say anything.

From the trolleys and on foot people came into Sheridan Park. Some sat on benches down by the bandstand, and some on the grass under the maples and sycamores. The girls in the flowered dresses and the big hats and the young men in the boaters vainly sought places away from the crowd. The mothers fretted at the children who would not sit still, but ran around and around on the smooth-clipped grass, and returned and returned for nickels for ice cream. The fathers loosened their ties and high collars, or took them off, and swapped stories about business and talked about Teddy Roosevelt. "He's for the common man," they said, "he'll show them."

Soon the bandmen climbed up into the stand and began tuning up, the horns moaning, mumbling with brassy grunts until the leader rapped sharply on his stand with the baton. The people grew quiet, and the concert began with the "1812 Overture."

In the middle of the piece Dave Bandler jumped up. "Hey, c'mon we'll be late for the ball-game."

At once the gang followed him, and Al Schaeffer said: "Bet I can beat you up to the field." They all began to run up the slope that led to the diamond laid out on the flat top of the hill.

When they got there, the ball players were just beginning to warm up, their quick nasal chatter crackling about the infield. A good-sized crowd was sitting about on the grass and the benches talking idly while they watched the ball players and appraised them. "Get a basket," someone yelled when the pigeon-toed short-stop let a fast one go through his legs and then dropped the throw-in.

At three o'clock, the umpire, Art Shevlin, who had played for the Baltimore Orioles and had once had a try-out with the Chicago White Sox, stepped out and faced the crowd. "Batt'ries for today's game between the South Side A. C. 'n' the North End Young Republican Club for the champeenship of the city: for the South Side, Rubel 'n' Peters: for the North End, Lowden 'n' Georgetti. Play ball!"

At the end of the fourth inning with the score 1-0 in favor of the South Side, John Cantrell sitting with Marius Schaeffer, neither saying much while the hot sun soaked into their backs, felt a touch on his shoulder and heard a boy's voice say: "Say, Mr. Cantrell?"

He turned around and recognized young Eddie Mundy from whom he had bought the vegetables in the morning. "H'lo, sonny," he said. "You got more vegetables?" Then aware of the sulky troubled look on Eddie's face, he asked quickly: "Something wrong?"

"Me 'n' my father's been lookin' all over for you, Mr. Cantrell," Eddie said. "They told us down to your house that you were here. My father wants to talk to you. He's waitin' back there."

The old man got reluctantly to his feet, wondering whether the father would be looking for favors because he had been kind to the son. It never fails, he thought vaguely, and said to Marius

who was looking up at him inquiringly: "Want to come along?"

"You want me to?"

John leaned over and said in a low voice while Eddie looked uncomfortable: "Yes, come on. I don't know what it's about, but come anyway." He straightened up and turned to Eddie. "Lead the way, bub."

As they walked away from the diamond, with Eddie some paces ahead, he told Marius quickly of the boy's coming to his house in the morning. Eddie led them to a short lean man who got up from the ground at their approach and said with self-possession: "I'm Harry Mundy." He shook hands with John Cantrell and with Marius after the old man introduced him.

John said: "I hope you don't mind that I brought Mr. Schaeffer along," and Mundy replied: "It doesn't matter. I'll just keep you a minute anyway." He held out his hand with a dollar bill and some change in it. "I just wanted to give this back to you, Mr. Cantrell. The boy shouldn't have taken it."

"Aw, Pa!" Eddie said.

Automatically the old man took the money. Then he made a gesture of protest. "Now, Mundy, aren't you being a little stiff-necked about this? After all, I gave it to the boy because I liked his spunk coming around selling vegetables when the other kids were having a good time."

"That's all very well," Mundy said, "but he didn't earn it."

"It wasn't given as charity," John said curtly.

"Ma said it was all right for me to keep it," Eddie said in a low voice. Twice already he had had to fight for it, and twice he had managed to hang on to it. He looked defiantly at his father.

Harry Mundy said: "That's enough now, Eddie."

"Look here now," John said, "I wish you'd let me give this back to the boy. For my pleasure. Let him buy some firecrackers with it, or ice cream." He smiled. "After all it's a holiday. . . . You can give your scruples a rest."

"I'm sorry, but it goes against my grain," the other said. He

shook his head. "Thank you just the same. . . . Come on, Eddie."

The boy did not move. "Ma said I could keep it," he said again. Unwinking, he stared up at his father. "It's my money. It was give to me, and I—"

His father's palm caught him hard across his cheek. "That's enough from you," he said. "Why don't you get down on your knees and beg him for it?"

At the blow, John Cantrell exclaimed hotly: "Look here, Mundy—" but Marius took his arm firmly, and said: "That's enough now, John. It's not your business any more."

"But all this fuss over some measly change! Why, I—"

Harry Mundy said stiffly: "Good day." He walked to Eddie who stood without flinching. "March," he commanded. The boy wheeled and began to walk away rapidly. His father followed him.

John and Marius walked back towards the diamond. "It makes my blood boil!" the old man said.

"It ought to be a lesson to you," Marius said.

"You're right, Marius," the old man said gloomily. "But I meant well."

A yell went up from the crowd, and they saw a long fly go arching out towards right field.

"I'm not talking about your arguing there. I don't blame you for that," Marius said. "But I mean about the money. The way they felt about it . . . their idol, like the Golden Calf. The boy's got the fever already—ready to fight his father for money. And the father's no better, making a regular ritual about it. About the way you get it, the way you take it. It's a kind of crazy worship—the rules are right, but the object they worship doesn't deserve them."

John Cantrell looked at his friend in bewilderment. "You're crazy, Marius! You got no right to spin your theories about a little matter like this."

"Well," Marius told him, "I could hardly expect you to see what I mean. In a way, you got the same ideas about money they

have. But I'm not surprised. It's the standard American idea anyway."

They were nearing the crowd strung out along the third-base line. The old man said: "Oh, sure. The standard American idea. I suppose if we had socialism, people would worry about something more important than money."

"Certainly," Marius said blandly. "That goes without saying."

"What? You tell me," the old man said excitedly. "They'd still have to worry about their bread and butter, wouldn't they? God-almighty, Marius, you rile me when you talk like this!"

"Sure, that's just it, John. Bread and butter. Not money. Not money for itself the way America worships it now. But what money stands for."

John Cantrell spun towards his friend, and his empty sleeve jerked out of his pocket and flapped a little. He began to say something, but as another yell went up from the crowd, he exclaimed: "That's enough! Didn't we agree this morning we'd have no arguments today? Didn't we? Can't I just enjoy this ball-game without your nagging at me, you old bullhead?"

Marius smiled. "You're right, John. I forgot. We'll go at it another day. . . . Come on!" He began to push his way through the crowd towards the baseline. "I want to see this game, too," he said over his shoulder.

They had only missed an inning and a half, and there had been no scoring while they were away. Along in the fifth inning, with the score still 1-0 in favor of the South Side Club, the North End worked Benny Rockett, their center fielder, around to third on a scratch single, a sacrifice, a wild pitch, and then, with two out, brought him home with a perfect squeeze play.

"Smart ball," they said in the crowd.

The score was still tied in the seventh when the managers of the teams came around collecting money for the players. When the hat appeared in front of John Cantrell, he dumped into it the money Mundy had returned to him.

Frenchy Latourette, manager of the North End Club, said:

"Gee, Mr. Cantrell, thanks! Thanks a lot!"

"It's all right, Frenchy," the old man said moodily. "It's a good game."

"Yeh," Frenchy said, "an' we're gonna win, too." He worked his way through the crowd, saying: "Jus' a little somep'n for the ball players, gen'l'men," his cap sagging with the weight of the change in it.

"Cheer up, John," Marius said, seeing the look of gloom that made his crony look like a sad hawk. "You're not going to let that Mundy feller bother you, are you?"

"No, but I've just been thinking what a licking that boy may be getting about now." He jumped to his feet and shouted: "Nice work, Ben," as the North End shortstop went to his left for a hardhit ball, and, off-balance, made a nice throw to first. He sat down again. "Say, this game might go to extra innings. . . . Matter of fact," he went on, "the father's got the right of it, I guess, though I side with the boy."

"Well, it's left a nasty taste in your mouth, I can see that," Marius said.

The game did go to extra innings. It finished in the twelfth with a three-run rally by the North End Club in the first half of the inning, while in their half the South Side, still fighting hard, got runners on second and third with two out, but petered out when Lou Griggs popped to the pitcher.

As soon as the game was over, a gang of boys rushed out on the diamond and started running races around the base paths. The rest of the crowd, talking about the game, moved slowly off the field, lingering under the shade of the trees on the slope going down. It was about six o'clock, and the declining sun was caught in the tallest maples. A cool breeze had sprung up. The people strolled out of the park, the young men running to get on the first of the waiting trolleys.

On this trolley Jack Smith the conductor said to Lily Marlow who had been sitting on the back seat of the conductor's platform with him: "Here they come, Lily."

"What of it?" she said. "It's a free country. . . . I'm gonna keep right on sitting here." She had wanted to go up into the park, but he had made her stay and they had been chewing the rag for quite a while. She had told him about her date with Paul Sakarian, but not about the money she got from him. "I'm gonna see the fireworks with him tonight," she had said.

"I thought you wouldn't be seen with a greasy foreigner."

"Well, this is at night," she said. "Who's gonna see us?"

"Pick a good place," he said.

"Whaddya mean by that remark?"

"Ah, come off it, Lily. Whodya think you're kiddin'? I wasn't born yesterday."

"Whaddya mean?" she persisted.

"How much you gonna get?" he said to her. "That's what I mean."

"If you're gonna talk that way, Jack," she said, "I'm goin'. I'm not stayin' here to be insulted." She rose, but he seized her hand and pulled her down beside him.

"Leggo of me!" she said. "You better talk different if you want me to stay."

"You know I'm crazy about you, Lily," he said. "I feel mean when you go out with some greasy slob jus' because he's got a little money."

"Well, you know what to do about it," she told him. "If you was to—"

"Yeah," he said, "you wanta get married on the chicken feed I'm makin', ringin' up nickels."

"Lots of people get married on less," she said. "The trouble is you already got what you want from me. If I wasn't so good-hearted"—she looked at him from under the brim of her hat—"we mighta been married now."

"No, that's not it, kiddo, I swear it ain't. . . . I just wanna get hold of some of the long green before we get married so's we can live in a little style and not like some of these cheap greenhorns. I was even thinkin' of gettin' outa town, goin' to N'York or Chi-

cago or even out to Frisco. . . . They say if you wanna make money, big money, you gotta go where money is."

"Y' don't mean it! You're not really gonna go?"

"That's what I was thinkin' of this mornin'," he told her firmly, watching her face, calculating, wondering when would be the right time to ask her for the money. "Here it is Fourth July, an' I ain't got a nickel to celebrate with. . . . An' this mornin' on the Williston run a farmer's kid gets on and shows a two-dollar bill for his fare. A fresh kid, too. I almost pasted him one. I'll bet his ol' man's got a good fat sock hidden away somewhere. An' if I knew where, I'd lift it, b'lieve me. Then I'd show you a time, Lily."

"Boy, I'd bet we'd have fun!" she said.

He plunged. "Listen, Lily, howsa about a little loan for a coupla days—just t' tide me over till pay-day?"

She said coldly, the shine going out of her eyes: "How about the twelve you owe me already? Seems to me you think you found a good easy mark in me."

"Lily," he pleaded, "I swear t'God, you'll get it back on pay-day. You c'n meet me up at the barn if you wanna." He looked at her somberly. "Besides, I'll get in trouble if I don't get five plunks by seven o'clock tonight. There's a fella I have to pay off, or somep'n'll happen to me."

"Yeah," she said, "that's a fine crowd you go with. That Sam Breedon, he's been in jail twicc somebody told me."

Now that he was fighting for the money, he began to lust for the evening's pleasure. He saw the hot room full of cigar smoke, the sweaty intent faces around the table, heard the loose easy talk of the boys, and the clink of the money on the table, tasted the rank springing whiskey in his throat, and felt rise within him the lust for easy money as he saw his hands rake in pot after pot. Squeezing her plump arm and pushing his body against hers, he said to her thickly: "Please, Lily, please. . . . Lookit how I'm beggin' you for five measly dollars."

"Oh, all right," she said, "quit cryin'." She pulled up the side of

her dress and her petticoats quickly, showing him a short but shapely leg and from the top of her stocking slipped a flat packet of wrinkled bills. She counted off five and gave them to him. "But remember!" she said. "You promised to pay it back outa your next pay."

"I swear t'God you'll get it, Lily," he said. "Give's a kiss, you little peacherino."

"Someone might see."

"Nah," he said, looking around, "there ain't anybody in sight."

She looked around. "The motorman?"

"Ah, him," Jack said. "The ol' fart's been half drunk mosta the day. He's sleepin' it off now."

She turned quickly to him, pressing her full bosom tight against him. His arms went around her, and he took a long moist kiss from her open lips.

"Lillian Russell's got nothin' on you, b'lieve me, Lily," he said when at last she drew away. "You got me on fire!"

"Sometimes I think I'm too affectionate," she said.

"Not too much for me, Lily. Sometimes I nearly go crazy just thinkin' of you."

The first of the crowd began to come out of the park.

"Maybe I'll see you tonight," he said, "after you get rid of that greasy slob."

He was through work at seven, and he hurried through the quiet streets on his way to Chick Williams's place. People were in having their suppers, and occasionally, through an open window, he glimpsed a family seated about a table. Once in a while he saw kids who had finished their suppers early trying out their sparklers from the piazzas. It's too light for sparklers, he thought idly, hurrying along, anticipating the game to come and praying for luck. It was time for his luck to turn, he had been losing steadily for the last two months. He wondered sometimes if the game were on the level. He hurried along, unmindful of the gentle fall of twilight, promising himself to play them carefully, promising to go light on the whiskey and keep his head clear, promising, if he won, to start

a savings account again with half his winnings, promising to save enough to blow out of town and make himself a good piece of change somewhere, promising to pay Lily back her money, but not promising to marry her—nix, kiddo, he knew too much for that. No marrying for him, nosiree. Just let him get hold of a wad of kale, and he'd be free, free as the wind, free to come and go—promising himself his freedom on the Fourth of July, promising himself the freedom of the wind while the shadows deepened about his hurrying feet.

He hurried along, and his fingers touched in his pocket the little packet of bills he had wheedled from Lily, the little peach-erino, and the two or three dollars in change he had managed to steal from the car company during the day. Maybe he had taken a little too much today, maybe they were talking about him now down at the car-barn offices, maybe he had been spotted today, maybe the inspectors were looking for him now. He began to sweat a little, promising himself he'd go a little easy on the nickel-stealing for a while, promising he'd begin to live a little more close and not be worrying all the time about his room rent and his meal ticket, promising to get a grip on himself, get hold of a little money and start a little business maybe. Many a fortune had been started on a shoestring by a slick guy who knew how to play his cards right. The country was full of easy money, and he would get a wad of it, promising himself he'd start tonight if luck was only with him.

In the cool of the twilight people were coming out to sit on their piazzas and slap at mosquitoes while the tiny red points of punk-sticks sent up their sweet spirals of smoke. The evening breeze murmured in the maples.

Smitty came to Chick Williams's place—Newspapers and Magazines—and went down the alley to the back door where he knocked softly. He heard the murmur of voices stop. In a moment the door opened, and Chick stuck his foxy face out.

"Jes's, Jack, what's been keepin' you?" he said. "We was afraid you wasn't comin'."

Going in ahead of Chick, Jack said to the others: "You guys can save some time by just handin' over the kale to me now."

They all laughed. "Don't worry, boys, we'll cool him off," Chick said.

"C'mon, let's cut out the gab an' get started," Sam Breedon said.

"Suits me," Jack said.

"Tell you what," Chick said, "if you guys wanna be real sports, seein' it's Fourtha July an' all, let's double the stakes. Whaddya say, huh?"

"That'll make it pretty steep, Chick," Sime Newpher said, and Jack echoed him, thinking that with double stakes he could lose all he had in no time.

But Breedon said: "Say, Chick, that's a great idea. We gotta celebrate the Fourth, see? . . . C'mon, you guys, don't be cheap sports now. A guy's a piker who won't celebrate on a day like this."

"All right with me," Maxie Voorhees said.

"Me, too," Herb Milliken chimed in.

Breedon said: "C'mon, Smitty. . . . You're the guy who was braggin' about how much you was gonna win. How about it?"

"Sure, I'm game." He looked at them cockily. "I'll show you tinhorn gamblers some Canfield plays that'll make your eyes bug out."

When they sat down at the table, it was just as he had pictured it in the afternoon. "It's gonna come true, I'm gonna rake it in," he said to himself, looking around at the sweat-filmed faces with the gas light flickering over them. He watched Chick's quick hands riffle the cards, hearing the clink of money on the table as the boys piled up their change in front of them, his own fingers nervously stacking up his nickels and dimes and quarters. He set his jaws together, picking up the cards of the first deal with affected slowness and taking a quick look at them while his heart began to pound hard. He had three nines, and he opened, his dime falling as carelessly as he wanted it to in the center of the table. It

was a good pot, and he won it, his three nines, that he had drawn nothing else to, topping Maxie Voorhees's kings and treys.

But he was not a good poker player. His game was careful and bold by turns, sometimes not careful but timid, too often not bold but reckless. On one hand he stayed with a four-flush, four hearts and a club. The betting before the draw was fairly heavy, and he had put in seventy or eighty cents in raises before it struck him that he should have dropped out. With the draw, however, although he did not fill his heart flush, he decided to stay, thinking that it might be a good time to run a bluff with such a heavy pot on the table. When, by betting recklessly, he had forced them all to drop except Sime Newpher who hesitated and fidgeted on every bet but had so far met each one, he felt a thrill of exultation. It's lucky for me you don't have to show openers in this game, he thought, but even as he exulted, Sime Newpher said with a sigh: "Well, I s'pose you got a royal flush or somep'n, but I'm callin', Smitty."

With dry lips, Jack asked: "What y'got, Sime?" and the other laid down a small straight, his eyes on Jack's face already telling him that he had read the bluff aright.

Jack forced a laugh. "God damn it, Sime, I bluffed 'em all but you," and watched with hot eyes the other's cupped palms pulling in the money.

From that hand on, he lost rapidly. It was about half-past nine when he said, leaning back with undeceiving nonchalance: "Well, boys, that cleans me of all I brang with me. . . ." With forced heartiness he went on: "One of you guys lemme take a fiver 'n' save me the trouble of goin' home for it."

"We don't play that way," Sam Breedon said after a pause.

The others merely looked at him, shaking their heads briefly as he met their eyes in turn.

"Okay," he said, "okay. If that's how you feel about it, I'll be goin'."

"Now, Smitty, don't get sore," Chick said.

"Who's sore?" Jack asked, his voice cracking. "I'm goin', but I'll be back. . . . An' just watch my dust when I get back, that's all I gotta say."

He went out while they were still saying: "So long, Jack."

Herb Milliken asked: "Will he be back?" and Breedon replied: "Nah, he's cleaned out. It's just another one of his phony bluffs."

Smitty went up the alley gritting his teeth because he had asked them to lend him money, cursing his luck and himself for the way he had played. His head felt thick, the whiskey had left a dirty taste in his mouth. He walked rapidly without thinking where he was going when he heard a faraway boom and looked up into the sky to see the long sprays of fire from Sheridan Park. Suddenly he thought of Lily and the Turk sitting in the park, watching the fireworks. He knew where they would be, too, because it was the place he and Lily always used—on a slope across from the big hill. Once you forced your way through the encircling clumps of bushes, you found yourself in the deep shade of a maple in a little open place where nobody could see you. He quickened his step with purpose and hastened towards the park where now spray after spray poured out its fire under the quiet stars and the slow-sailing moon.

"It's a lovely night," Josie said. "See the moon caught in the trees."

"Like a new-minted goldpiece," Francis said.

They strolled along, hearing about them the murmuring of the people in the park between the oh's and ah's at every burst of fireworks.

"I'm a little tired, Francis," Josie said at last, and he found a bench set back under the trees where they sat down.

They watched the fireworks for a while, and then Francis said: "I meant to ask before—how's your father?"

"I hope he's fast asleep by now. He came home from the ball-game looking just exhausted."

"He did look a little tired even this morning," Francis told her.

"He's like a child sometimes," said Josie. "Has to see everything, do everything all at once."

"It's the good heart he has," Francis said.

"Sometimes he tries to do too much. . . . After all he owes something to himself, too," Josie said. "I think if he took up with business again, he wouldn't work as hard as he does now. As it is, he's always so busy finding things to keep himself busy that he works just twice as hard."

"There's something in that," Francis agreed. He glanced at her serious face, shining palely in the shadow of her big hat, and felt his love for her overflowing his heart. "Y'know," he said, "that my grandfather and your father were friends?"

"That's so," she said, "Father mentioned it to me for the first time this morning."

A silence fell upon them. The warm summer night enclosed them, the moonlight lay checkered at their feet. They saw each other's faces in the great lights that flared out now and then from the crest of the hill. "It's a great thrill for the kids, these fireworks," Francis said after a time.

"Yes," she said, "I remember when I was a little girl how they used to thrill me. They still do for that matter."

"Y'know, Josie," he said, "I remember you when you were a little girl at the Motley Street School."

"You dó?" she exclaimed.

He nodded. "A sweet solemn little thing you were with taffy-colored braids hanging down your back."

"But you must've been three or four grades ahead of me," she said. "A big boy wouldn't have noticed a funny-looking little girl."

"Ah, now you're fishing," he said, smiling. "Yet there wasn't a day that I didn't look for you." He leaned towards her. "But you being one of the rich Cantrells and one of the oldest families in town—such was the talk in my house—and me being such an awkward overgrown gossoon and you so dainty and all, why, it

never came to me that I could seek you out to be friends."

"You might have," she said. "I wish you had, Francis." She paused while a bomb burst above the hill-top and rained down its shower of red and golden fire. "That was a pretty one. . . . I was a lonely girl after my mother died. And we'd been so close to each other, I had never had many friends among the other children. I came to her late, you see," she said softly, waking in her heart the ache of long-remembered grief.

"She was a sweet woman I've heard," Francis said gently. He caught in her voice the faint vibration of her mourning.

"And I could've used a friend," she said, "a good friend."

"I would have been that," he said earnestly.

"She was sweet—almost a saint," Josie said. "I hope—" she stopped.

Francis said quickly: "That you're as sweet as she was? . . . Ah, Josie, you are! To me, you are." He could hold back no longer the declaration of his love. "If I could only speak out all that's in my heart, Josie." Overwhelmingly, now that he had begun, the words full of soft fire sprang from his lips: "D'you think that I watched you from childhood out of a boy's idle curiosity? Did you now, Josie? Ah, no! There was love in my heart for you even then, from the first moment I saw you, and watched your gentle step in the schoolyard. You would not know now, would you, that I cried with grief for you when they said in the corridors that your mother was dead? Ah, the wall that I thought was between us was so little—I should've stepped across it to you. Maybe I could have brought you a little comfort in those days when I gazed and gazed on your pale little face with the sadness brooding on it. . . ."

She put her hand out as if to stop him, but he seized and held it and went on impetuously: "And in the years afterwards, Josie, all the pretty faces I saw, they were nothing, they vanished away when I thought of you, like that passin' fire up there goes away under the quiet unfailin' look of the moon. . . . Moon and sun and all you are to me, Josie, and if I'm talking wild now, it's that

my love for you is too deep to come glib to my tongue. . . ." He stopped suddenly and said to her averted shoulders: "You're not cryin'? . . . Ah, my love!"

His arm went around her shoulders, and then her face was pressed close against his. He murmured his endearments until her mouth turned to his.

Later he said: "I'm not a rich man, Josie darlin', but I will be some day. . . . You'll never want for anything, my own, my love."

"Hush, Francis," she said, "I'm not thinking of that." She felt a deep content. She was remembering what Harvey had said to her in the afternoon. Now I know what he meant about riding the wave, she thought. A woman feels it differently, that's all. And she saw in the years to come a fulfillment of herself on the long deep wave of life and felt within herself a pulsing drum-beat. I'll march, too, she thought, and stirred comfortably in Francis's arms. . . .

"There's other sweethearts abroad tonight," he said a little later. "Look." He nodded to where Louie Davis and Irene Curtis walked, and paused, and walked again in close talk. "Ah, that might've been you and me years ago, Josie."

"Don't think about the past now, Francis. We've still a whole lifetime before us. . . . They're sweet though, aren't they?" she said, looking after the couple as they turned the path.

LOUIE DAVIS and Irene Curtis paused in the path to look up at the fireworks. "They're pretty, Louie, aren't they? . . . Look at that one!"

"Yeah," Louie said, "but wait'll you see the giant pinwheel they got. Then you'll see somephthin'."

They walked, and paused to look up at the fireworks, and walked again, Louie being careful not to bump or touch her as they walked.

After a time she said: "I didn't see you here this afternoon, Louie. I saw the rest of your gang, though."

"Yeah, who?"

"Oh, you know. Ambrose Tait and that nigger, Indie Whipple—I don't know why you have him. . . . Let's sit down somewhere," she said.

"Ah, it's more fun to walk," Louie said. "What were the fellers doin' this afternoon when you saw 'em?"

"Oh, nothing much. Running like a bunch of wild Indians up the hill. I guess they were going to the baseball game. . . . Why weren't you with them?"

"I hadda stay home." After a moment he added: "My father beat me. Tied me to a post in the cellar and beat me."

"He did!"

He nodded, not looking at her. "With a heavy strop."

"Oh, Louie!" she said. "Did it hurt much?"

"I fainted. It was funny—just like a black wave goin' over me."

"But, Louie, what for?"

"For nothin', that's what for." His voice shook. "Because he likes to, that's what for. . . ." In a lower voice he said: "I wish he'd drop dead!"

"Louie!—he's your father!"

"What of it?" he said, "whaddo I care?"

"C'mon, let's sit down here," she said.

They walked off the path and a little way up the slope of the hill.

"This is a good place, Louie. C'mon, sit down." She patted the ground beside her. He sat down, and she said to him: "He wouldn't hit you like that for nothing."

"Oh, no? That's all you know about it." His voice trembled.

Her hand touched his. "I'm awful sorry, Louie. It musta been terrible."

"You don't know," he said, seeing again the terrible rigid gape of his father's mouth. "You don't know," he repeated, and suddenly the touch of her cool fingers broke the restraint that had held him since he had strangled his pain in the cellar, and his body shook with sobs. He pulled his hand out of hers, and held his face

hidden while he tried to choke back his anguish, but it was no use. He sobbed and beat his drawn-up knees with his clenched fists while she watched him, frightened.

She tried to seize his hands, and then when she felt his tears dropping upon her fingers, she was no longer afraid. "Louie, Louie," she said, "I'll take care of you. Don't cry, Louie. . . . I'm your girl." She turned him, still sobbing, towards her and laid his head upon her young bosom. For a moment he resisted, and then the soft warmth of her arms cradled his head, and he sat for a long time, his sobs slowly lessening, while her hands smoothed his hair with caressing gentleness.

When he lifted his head, she said in a brisk tone: "Wait now," and took the handkerchief tucked into her belt and wiped his blubbered face with it gently, brooding upon his closed eyes and hot flushed cheeks. Eagerly he inhaled the delicate violet scent of the handkerchief, cool like the fingers that lightly touched his face. He opened his eyes at last, but shamefaced turned them away from her until she seized his head between her hands and made him look at her.

"Louie?" she said. "Feel better now?"

Dumbly he nodded.

"Cat got your tongue?" she asked.

He shook his head, then said huskily: "Gee, Irene, you're wonderful."

"Well, I'm your girl, aren't I?" she said. "And gee, Louie, if you're in trouble. . . ."

"Are you my girl? Really, Irene?" His eyes brightened upon her. "Honest to God?"

"Cross my heart and hope to die," she said.

"That's peachy," he said humbly.

"Louie?"

"What?"

"Aren't you going to kiss me—if I'm your girl?"

"Yes," he said strongly. "Yes—if you promise to be my girl for ever 'n' ever."

"Yes, I promise, Louie, I promise," she whispered. She leaned towards him. Lightly her small firm lips brushed his, and he felt himself cleansed of all anguish and the memory of anguish, looking to the years to come forever and ever. . . .

SITTING higher up on the slope and watching with interest the boy and girl below them were Paul Sakarian and Lily Marlow.

"Well, whaddya know about that?" Lily exclaimed. "The size of 'em, huggin' and kissin' like that! I bet they're no more than fourteen. I don't know what the kids nowadays are comin' to. Imagine!"

Paul smiled. "A boy of fourteen is a man in my country," he said.

"Whaddya mean?" She peered at him. "Oh," she said, "I see. . . . Why, you naughty thing!"

He was bewildered, but smiled at her. "If I stay in Armenia," he said, "I am married a long time now."

"You mean you was married over there? Married already?"

"No, no," he said quickly, "my speaking is not very good, you do not understan' me."

"Oh, now I see," she said. "You mean if you'd stayed over there and not come over to America you'd been married a long time ago."

"Yes, yes," he said eagerly, "is what I mean."

"Say," she said, "d'you say you was takin' lessons in English?" He nodded. "Well," she went on, "I bet I could do better than the one that's learnin' you now. . . ."

"Certn'ly," he said, "certn'ly. I like to take lessons with you, Lily."

"Oh look, that was a beauty!" she said suddenly. "Gee, look at that now, them beautiful colors." She turned back to him. "You know what this day is, don't you?"

"Sure, July fourt'," he said.

"Yeah, but d'you know what it's for—all this celebration 'n' the fireworks 'n' everything?" He tried to speak, but she went on:

"Well, I'll tell you—it's to celebrate the in'pendence of America from England, that's what."

"Yes, yes, I know. I read in history book. . . . On July 4, 1776, the Continental Congress declared America free of the mother country, Great Britain. Yes," he said.

She was surprised. "Yeah, that's right," she said. "I guess you're learnin' to be an American, all right."

"Betcha life," he said unexpectedly, and she burst into laughter. "Whassa matter?" he asked. "Not nice talk?" pleased that he had pleased her.

"You're learnin' fast, all right, all right! . . . Gee, you're better'n a circus."

"I'm good American soon," he said. "No?"

"Betcha life," she came right back at him and again shook with laughter.

"You like to hear my talk, huh?"

"You're a scream," she said.

He took her hand.

"Now don't get fresh," she told him, but he said earnestly:

"Lily, no more fun now . . . Lily, I'm good American. Pretty soon I get second papers. But is not good for man to live alone. A man likes to have a family—wife, children—an' be happy. I got nize little business. Some day nize big business, you'll see. You marry me, Lily. I make you ver' happy."

"Well, gee," Lily said, "don't start that now. . . . I told you today I never even thought of gettin' married. Whaddya wanta marry me for anyway? There must be plenty of nice girls from your own country you could marry."

"Yes, very nize," he agreed, "but I want to marry American girl. You, Lily. An' have American children." He gazed hungrily at the coils and coils of yellow hair. "You marry me, Lily, I'm nize to you. You don' have to work in Schaeffer's store no more. At night I come home, we have nize supper, we have nize long evening togedder."

"Yeah," Lily told him, "I c'n see myself doin' that. . . .

There'll be a hot time in the ol' town tonight.' ”

“What?” he said. “I do not understan’, Lily.”

“Forget it.” She looked away from the pleading eyes in the heavy face. “Gee,” she said to him, “I don’t know what t’say, Paul,” suddenly remembering that she was to get five dollars from him, and thinking that if she were too short with him now, maybe she’d spoil her chances for many another fiver. “I don’t mind workin’ in Schaeffer’s. He’s a good boss to work for.”

“He give you money?” Paul asked quickly.

“Well, for God’s sake, what a mind you got! Why, Mr. Schaeffer’s a perfect gen’leman.” She was overcome at the thought of any intimacy with Marius Schaeffer. “That’s a fine way to talk about one of the finest men in this whole city. Why, if anyone was to hear you talkin’ like that about him, you’d get run outa town. The idea!”

“Do not be angry with me, Lily,” he said. “I am very juliss man.”

“‘Jealous,’ you mean.”

“Yes, jealiss, very jealiss.”

“Well, you got no cause to be. And you got no right either. We’re not engaged,” she told him. “Besides, like I told you before, I don’t wanna get married. I wanna be free ’n’ independent.”

“Lily—” Paul said, and suddenly, overcome by his yearning, he put his arms clumsily about her, and tried to kiss her.

She struggled to free herself. “I’ll scratch your dirty eyes out,” she panted. She felt his arms grow slack about her, pushed away from him, and saw a look of terror on his face.

At the same moment a low hoarse voice behind her said: “Stick ’em up if you don’t wanna get plugged!”

Trembling, she twisted about, scrambled to her feet, and put her hands up over her head. “Don’t shoot,” she mumbled, “don’t shoot,” terrified by the gleaming eyes that showed above the handkerchief tied across the hold-up man’s face and by the glint of metal in his hand.

“Shut up,” the low voice said. “Hand over the money.”

With shaking fingers she fumbled beneath her petticoats and gave him a little flat packet of bills. "It's all I got," she said. "Don't shoot!"

The man said to Paul: "C'mon, Mister, hand over the wallet before I shoot you fulla holes."

Slowly, Paul fumbled in his breast pocket and brought out his wallet. But when the other's fingers snatched it from his hand, he grunted deep in his throat and stepped forward. The weapon whirled up and smashed down on his head. A trickle of blood appeared on his brows as he went down.

Whimpering, Lily fell to her knees. "Don't hit me! Don't. . . ."

The robber lunged abruptly past her, and crashed away through the bushes. She screamed again and again with all her strength, and at last heard the murmur of excited voices and the rushing of feet towards her. Still she screamed uncontrollably as she realized with unshakable conviction that the voice of the robber was Jack Smith's voice.

While Lily's screams echoed and re-echoed behind him, Smitty followed the plan he had laid out. He cut up over the slope, running low through the trees, discarding as he ran the handkerchief that he had tied over his face and the short length of pipe he had used for a gun. When he came to the gravel path that led to the top of the hill, he slowed to a walk, and as people began hurrying down the hill towards Lily's screaming, he slipped into the crowd and let himself be hustled along with it. At the bottom of the hill under a gas light he saw the crowd pushing, straining its necks, and he said to a man beside him: "Say, what's happened?"

"I dunno," the other said, "but they say a crook just shot a man and his wife. . . . Some screamin', hey?" He pointed up the slope. "Look, the cops're bringing 'em down now." The man eagerly moved up closer, and Jack sauntered past, craning his neck like the others on the outskirts of the crowd.

A policeman came bustling up. "C'mon now. . . . Let's clear the walks. Break it up now."

Jack obediently moved off. He walked with pounding heart to-

ward the park gates, tense that at any moment the cry of "Stop, thief!" might be raised behind him, fearful lest a hand touch his shoulder and a voice say: "You're under arrest!" But nothing happened, and at last he was clear of the park exit.

Several blocks on, he paused and, looking back, saw the crest of the hill brilliantly lighted by the giant pinwheel. Under the street-lamp, he took from his pocket the hand which all the time had sweatily clenched the wallet and the little wad of bills. He counted first, with shaking fingers, the five one-dollar bills he had taken from Lily, and shoved them back into his pocket. Then he opened Paul's wallet. His fingers caressed the money, and he exulted to himself: "Oh boy!" as he counted seventeen dollars. "Oh boy!" he said, "I'll show 'em now!" He wadded the money deep into his pocket, and when he came to the corner of the street, dropped the wallet into the gutter and kicked it down the sewer-mouth. Briskly he turned and made for Chick's place.

"Didn't expect t'see me again tonight, hey?" he said to the faces turned in surprise to him.

"You made quick time, all right," Herb Milliken said.

"Say, how long ya think it takes to get to my boardin'house an' back in my flyin' machine? I just hadda dig down under the ol' mattress, that's all." He threw Lily's packet down before him. "Deal me in, Chick, I got my second wind."

"'Wind' is right," Sam said.

The others laughed, and Jack said to them: "Laugh all you wanna, sports, but watch my dust."

He had wonderful, crazy luck. Some of the hands he got were so bad that he could not take any kind of risk with them, and he just threw them in. But when a hand had possibilities, he realized on it nearly every time. He got his revenge on Sime Newpher. He had picked up a hand with two pair, aces and sevens, and on the draw caught another ace for a full house. To his delight everyone stayed, and he kept raising while the others, reckoning that he was trying to bluff them by riding his earlier luck, followed along.

When the call came, Sime Newpher threw his cards down face

up. "There they are, boys, a nice little full house, nines top." He reached out for the money.

The others groaned, but Smitty laid his hand over Sime's. "Just a minute, Sime," he said slowly, savoring his triumph, "just a minute. A little full house is nothin' to a big full house. . . . Lay your peepers on those." With an exultant flourish he laid down his cards. "Come to baby!" he said, raking in the heavy change with the bills strewn over it.

"Lucky bastard," Maxie Voorhees growled.

"Luck nothin'!" Jack said. "Good poker-playin', that's all. You guys wanna take lessons from the expert?"

"Aw, quit gassin', and deal," Sam Breedon said.

When the game broke up at one o'clock because Maxie Voorhees and Herb Milliken were cleaned out, Smitty had won back the nine dollars he had dropped earlier in the evening and made fourteen dollars besides. "Just call on me, boys, any time you want a little lesson—just call on the Canfield of this city," he said, rubbing it in as he left the others at the entrance to the alley. "Easy money, Smitty," he exulted, going home through the quiet streets, seeing far off on the horizon the glare of a bonfire, "easy money." Over and over he reckoned the amount in his mind—a dollar of his own, three from the car company, five from Lily, five more from Lily in the park and seventeen from the Turk in the park, and fourteen from the boys. One and three was four and five was nine and five was fourteen and seventeen—le's see—and seventeen was thirty-one and fourteen was—uh—forty-five! "Easy money, Smitty boy!"

And he could do it again, too, if he was hard up, if he got caught short; it was easy to go up to the park, there were always plenty of sports and their girls spooning in the shadows, stick them up, and get a little wad of easy kale. "Easy as pie!" he said to himself, walking through the deserted tired streets, the moon sinking down now towards the red glow of the distant bonfire. "Forty-five plunks! More'n three weeks pay in no time at all . . . in one night." A nice fat little roll, he thought, fingering lovingly

the fat little roll in his pocket. "Easy money, easy as pie, Smitty boy!" He would make it up to Lily, give her back the dough he had borrowed, too bad he had scared the little peacherino. He would give her a time, maybe buy her a nice little present. The Turk?—the hell with the Turk. It would be a good lesson for him. Teach him that in America it was every man for himself—no dopes wanted.

He crossed Congress Square with the shadow of City Hall falling across it and the reviewing-stand bare and gaunt outside the shadow. Far away, once in a while, a firecracker popped. He quickened his pace, eager to get to his room, to light the gas mantle and spread the money out on the bureau and see it in the light. When he came to his boardinghouse on Polk Street, he ran up the steps but slowed after he got into the hall, and went up the musty-smelling flight of stairs on tiptoe. He did not want an argument in the morning with Mrs. Pendergast about his coming in late and disturbing her other boarders.

He unlocked his door, slipped in, locked the door behind him, and put a match to the gas mantle. The gas flared up, and he turned around and saw two men sitting on the bed watching him. He felt sick with the sudden shock of fear, but he blustered: "Who are you guys? Whaddya doin' here?"

The shorter of the two men got up and flipped back his coat-lapel. Smitty saw the gleam of his badge. "We're from Headquarters," the man said. "Capt'n'd like to talk to you."

The other rose and stretched. "C'mon, let's get goin'."

"What's he want me for? Jes's, I didn't do nothin'."

"Ah, cut it," the first detective said, "you c'n tell it to the judge."

"I didn't do nothin', I'm not goin'."

"Listen, sport," the other said, "whyncha get wise to yourself and come along quiet?"

"You can't make me go," Jack said as they came close to him. "I was with friends all evenin', havin' a little game of cards. That's all."

"Well, maybe that's what the Cap'n wants you for," the second man said. "I dunno."

"I don't have to go," Jack said, "I'm a free American citizen, I got my rights." He felt better now that it was only for the card-playing they wanted him. "Where's your warrant?"

"Oh," said the short man, "a smart Aleck, hey? . . . Do you want to come peaceful, or do you want a little tap onna cranium? The way you tapped the Armenian maybe, huh?"

They came menacingly close, but at the mention of his hitting Sakarian, such a wave of sickness had gone over him that he felt like vomiting. "I'll go," he said weakly. The sweat felt cold on his forehead. "Don't hit me. I'll go. . . ."

"It's been a fine Fourth July," the short one said to his companion as they marched Smitty to the door.

"Fine, fine," the other said.

"Just one parade after another." The first jerked his thumb towards their prisoner.

"You're a card," the other one said.

"No, not me, it's this free American citizen is the card," the short man said as they marched down the stairs.

EARLIER in the evening John Cantrell had tried to read, but could not concentrate, and so having made himself comfortable in nightshirt, bathrobe, and slippers, he sat by the window and watched the fireworks rise over the city. After a time, still feeling restless, he went to his desk, unlocked the bottom drawer, and brought out some loose sheets of manuscript, the first pages of his projected history of the city, begun some four years ago after he had nearly died of pneumonia.

While he was convalescing, Doc Merkle had said that he ought to take it easy for a good long time after he was on his feet again, and had gone on to remark in his casual testy way that he could see no sense, at John's age, in his hanging on to business and that he ought to give it up for good—retire and take it easy. That had been enough for Josie, that was all she wanted to hear. His illness

had frightened her so much that by the time he was better, it was she who looked as if she had been sick. Because if she lost him who had been both father and mother to her since she was twelve, she would be left alone in the big old house, the last of her branch of the family. So after what the doctor had said, she pleaded with him so long and so often, her fear of losing him plain in her eyes, that at last he had given in to her—had decided to close the real estate office that he had been running alone since his father's death in '74.

Not to please Josie alone, however. Lying in bed, staring out of the windows while the pale spring sunlight moved across the panes during the days of his convalescence, he had sometimes fought his restlessness and boredom with memory. For his amusement he sent his mind ranging back through the years, delighted on one afternoon that he had succeeded in reaching back to an event in the city which, by careful checking and cross-checking, he decided had taken place in 1847 when he was five years old. He had turned to his memories for amusement, but they ended by bemusing him. With astonishment and pleasure he remembered a thousand things that in the pressure of the present had nearly faded out of mind, things that brightened as he regarded them and sometimes touched him so that he grinned to himself at something grotesque or comic, or even groaned as the pain of something grave or tragic quickened into life again.

So sometimes when in the early twilight Josie came in from school with her recurrent, "How are you feeling, Father? Are you all right?" he would unintentionally frighten her by taking a long time to answer, still moving in a nearly lost and difficult landscape of the memory. He saw at last how his past years and the present moment fused into one time of one place, and it was then that he got the idea of writing a history of his city, and had told Josie yes—he would give up the business. He would give what years he had left to the life of the city that his family had so many years ago sunk its roots in, the city that had given him his own life, hoping, he had told himself in the very moment of his

decision, to find the real and final meaning of both lives before he and his memories vanished together out of Persepolis. And he would make his history an acknowledgment of his debt to the city, not only for himself, but for his family, and not only for those still living, but also for the dead who had given their lives to Persepolis and whom Persepolis had repaid a hundredfold.

But when he first sat down to write, he labored vainly. It was not a history of the Cantrells he wanted to write, but the history of his city's life in America, seeing in its growth the twining and intertwining of many lives so woven together in the bond of their common life that one could not pick out one man, one family, and say: "This one must be remembered and honored above the rest." So, too, he did not wish to honor Persepolis alone in his chronicle as if she were not among her sister cities of America. No, he told himself, he wanted to make his readers feel that Persepolis was America in little, that its virtues were drawn from the common stock of American virtues, and that its vices were the errors of common American life. Most of all, he would wish to say—and for this conclusion Marius Schaeffer had called him a sentimental old fool—that the vices of Persepolis could not spring from a love of evil, but from the excess of her virtues.

But of this, aside from Marius's derision, he was still uncertain, for when his mind ranged over his own experience and that of the other lives he had known, he could not say where a man's spirit might be separated from the larger spirit of his time and his place, and so fix the blame of evil upon one or the other. To Marius, of course, the answer was easy, because to him a man's spirit was a small mirror to the larger spirit and reflected it, maybe dimly, but truly. On this he had never yielded to Marius because he thought that a man's spirit, if a man willed it so, could be stronger than the time and place in which it lived, and he had said so to Marius again and again in their debates during the thirty years of their friendship.

Aside from what he wanted to say, there was the difficulty of writing itself, and now slowly turning the pages of the manuscript

on his desk, he wondered if the first chapters over which he had worked so long held more than a mere record of names and places and events, hoping that there arose from the narrative some reflection, however dim, of the love he bore his city, and the tenderness he felt for its people, both the living and the dead. " 'Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,' " he whispered to himself while his hands turned the pages, seeking the words that might echo, however faintly, the feeling and the faith of his heart. While the murmuring of people returning from the park died away and the streets, except for the occasional distant rattle of a late trolley, fell quiet, he read, bending his head into the yellow circle of the gaslight, the last few paragraphs he had written:

On the gentle slope of the long ridge facing the Quessota River, the settlers established themselves and their families in the early summer of 1809, the land having been purchased shortly after the return of the Colonizing Committee, according to the Congressional Act of May 10, 1800.

They were resolved to make the wilderness smile around them, to build up the institutions of education and religion and society, and to leave their children members of an independent, resourceful, and cultivated community. They were a courageous and determined people, most of them being men and women of tried experience and endurance, some of the older men, indeed, having served in the Army of the Revolution. Though assembled from many different places, they felt themselves bound together by a common interest and a common faith. They were, in short, an associated body, both as men and as citizens, and only a few months were necessary from the time of their arrival to give them the stability of a well-composed society. They were not mere adventurers fortuitously thrown together, but an association carrying their own liberties with them, each member bound to consult the general good as well as his private interest.

With them settled inspiring though quiet housemates: manly toil, patient endurance, steady habits, and serene faith. Each labored long hours in field and pasture, but each helped his neighbor,

understanding that from the general happiness alone could his own comfort and happiness spring. In every object about him, in everything a man tasted or touched, there was something of himself, his own strength and sweat, so that his life extended beyond himself, and all things became a part of his own life.

Trespasses against the ecclesiastical and civil laws were rare: a fine decorum of manners prevailed: sympathy, kindly counsel, and friendly assistance softened the rigors of the wilderness, and the hearts of all were strengthened by the word of God. All the enactments and proceedings of the fathers of the city, all that can be gathered concerning them from letters, journals, account-books, diaries, early narratives, records, and traditions, exhibits a well-organized and healthy community—a people, bold, earnest, thoughtful and pious, with the ring of the true metal in their lives.

He looked up from the pages, hearing again the steady humming of the gas, and sensed the night softly enclosing the city, the slow-breathing living and the long-gone dead, making like Time itself, no distinction between them, but brooding softly over all. And suddenly he felt a discontent with what he had written. The words tasted flat and tepid to him. There was no glow in them, he told himself, to light the fire of feeling in the heart of a reader. They moved laboriously upon the page, dull-colored and wingless. He got up and paced up and down a few minutes, turning, trying words and phrases in his head, and finally in despair stopped by the window and looked out over the dark city. He started back in alarm at the dull red glow that under the sinking moon lighted up the far horizon and seemed to menace the city. But in an instant he remembered that it was the bonfire that burned under the far sky in a last glowing celebration of the day, and as he looked, he heard from afar, from the railroad yards beyond the hills, a deep and steady beat like the pounding of a great hammer upon an anvil somewhere under the distant horizon. His heart beat faster: the lingering excitement of the day, the pictures he had been evoking from the days long past, the warm dark fragrance of the summer night, the distant red glow and the strong rhythm that

rose from the horizon all fused together and excited in him a strange mingling of love and fear.

After a moment he turned back to his desk and began to read again:

"There were fifty-four families that came into the wilderness in 1809, and their names were: Adgey, Affleck, Bascomb, Brassbine, Cantrell, Corvin, Crowne, Daggett—"

He heard Josie's quick knock on the door, and then her voice: "Are you all right, Father? May I come in?"

Reluctantly he laid the pages down. "Of course, I'm all right. Come in, Josie."

She came in, her face flushed and smiling. "It's much too late for you to be up. What've you been doing?" She saw the pages strewn on his desk. "Oh, I see. . . . About time too."

"For that matter, Josie, why are you up so late?" he asked.

She came close to him then, and said: "I've been spooning, Father. . . . Yes, spooning. . . . On the front stairs with Francis Connell. We've been looking at the moon, and saying all sorts of foolish things, and we're going to be married."

"Godalmighty, Josie!" he exclaimed. It was an omen of good, it was the past and the present coming together in his house in his city, and pleased beyond any more words, he jumped up and flung his arm about her and kissed her while she murmured in laughter: "Why, Father . . . Father . . .", the summer night pouring its fragrance and the promise of the years to come about them.



ON THE day after the Fourth when John Cantrell came into the Bank, he said to Harvey: "What's up? You look as if you'd been dragged through a knothole."

"You don't look too much like a daisy yourself," Harvey said. "You must've celebrated long hours yesterday."

"Lots of excitement at my house last night," John told him, unable to hold back his elation, "what with Josie's coming in and telling me she's engaged to marry Francis Connell."

Harvey smiled. "About time—she's kept him dangling long enough." He shook hands with the other. "Pleased, are you?"

"Tickled to death. There'll be no old maid in my family!"

"I'll bet you dreamed half the night about dandling their toddlers on your knee."

The old man laughed. "You're not far wrong, Harvey."

"Well," Harvey said, "you give Josie my love, and Belle and I'll make a call some evening this week." He sat down, and asked abruptly: "Josie tell you why I asked you to drop in?"

"No," John said, "only that you made a fine Fourth of July speech to her."

"I got carried away," Harvey said. "Yesterday was an exciting day for me. Father and I were at it hammer and tongs. Didn't see the parade even."

The old man hitched his chair up close to his cousin's desk. "You want to go easy with your father, Harvey. I noticed he's been failing lately. Don't forget he's five, six years older than me. . . . Must be—let's see—seventy if he's a day."

"I know," Harvey said. "He and I've always got on pretty well together. You know that. But the last year or so something's come up so important to us, to all of us—I mean you too—that it just couldn't be helped. Father's so old-fashioned in some ways that sometimes he gets me wild."

"You ought to get him to retire like me, Harvey, and take things easy."

"Yes, I've told him that, but he won't." With some bitterness Harvey added: "Seems to think the Bank'll just go to pot if he gives up working."

"Well," John said slowly, "this bank's been his whole life, Harvey. He's never done anything else. He's so used to the harness now, he wouldn't know what to do if it was taken off. . . . Not like me. I finally got galled."

"Sure," Harvey said, "and you were smart. You're younger and stronger than he is too. Maybe," he went on, looking reflectively at the alert hawkish face opposite him, "maybe you might want to get into the traces again."

"Well, depends on what it is, Harvey," the old man said cautiously.

Harvey ran his hand tiredly down the side of his face. He said: "If you'll just lean back and give me my head—"

"Go ahead, then, Harvey. . . . I'm listening."

Harvey picked up a sheaf of papers from his desk. "These are our statements for the last seven years," he said. "I'm not going to read all the figures to you, I'm just going to give you the facts about the figures. . . ." He leaned forward abruptly. "This bank's slipping."

The other exclaimed, and Harvey said quickly: "Don't get scared. I don't mean the Bank's in any danger right now, but I say—and I mean this—that if we don't do something in the way of

bettering our business, this bank won't be good for much in ten or fifteen years. Maybe won't be here at all," he added solemnly.

"Nonsense, Harvey! What kind of bogeyman are you raising up?"

"I mean it," Harvey insisted. "For God's sake, don't take Father's attitude. He keeps saying: 'The Bank's been in business since 1835—it'll still be going in 1935.' But it won't, unless we do something. . . . Well, now, listen: From 1890 to 1900 our capital stock paid a dividend of 10 per cent most of the years; in '95 it was 12 per cent, and in '98 it was 11 per cent. But look what it's been from 1900 up to now—in 1900, 9 per cent; in 1901, 8 per cent; in 1902, 8 per cent; in 1903, 7 per cent; in 1904, 7 per cent; 1905, 7 per cent; in 1906, 6 per cent, and this year it can't possibly be more than 6 either. It might not seem much of a difference to you, but—"

"It is, Harvey. It certainly is." The old man looked serious.

"Well, now," Harvey said, "even a small-town banker would know something's wrong. This bank's just not doing the business. Father says our deposits have grown right along, but he won't see that they haven't grown as much or as fast as they did from 1890 to 1900 or even in the '80's. All he can see is the gross figures from year to year. I just can't get him to take a long view."

"What else you got in your calculations, Harvey?" the old man asked.

Harvey lighted a cigar, and then after a few quick puffs laid it down on the ash-tray. "I got you sitting up, hey? . . . Well, naturally, I've been trying to think up some ways of doing better business, but every time I suggest something to Father, he sits back and moans at me about avoiding risks and taking no chances. Why, you've got to take some chances in business, even in the banking business! The whole history of the country—you know it yourself—is a history of taking chances. The first settlers came on a blind chance, a desperate one. They opened up the country, taking chances. But yesterday when I put this matter up to him,

he began the same old moan till I had to gnaw my knuckles to keep from exploding with a bang that would've been heard for miles!"

John grinned.

"Oh, it's funny all right," Harvey said, "but you get mighty tired of straining at a leash that won't even give, never mind break." He got up and walked to the window that faced on the Square. "Look," he said more quietly, "there goes the city, and it's going right past us. I tell you, not enough of those people are coming in here, and some day none of them will."

The old man looked around at him. "By the way, Harvey," he said, "did you know I've been writing a history of this city?"

Harvey came back from the window, and sat down. "You are? I suppose it's all about the wonderful thickheaded Cantrells."

"Now, Harvey, cool off. Matter of fact, I mentioned it because I'll be writing soon about business in the old days, and I'd like a look at the early records of the Bank."

"You can have them any time," Harvey told him. "This bank'll be ancient history soon anyway."

"I guess your Pa's put your teeth on edge all right," John said drily. He tipped back in his chair. "Come on now, Harvey, let's have the rest of your story."

"All right," said Harvey. He picked up his papers again. "Here goes. . . . I've hit on something so big it scared me at first till I got used to it. But if a man has got faith in the development of his country and his own ability, then—"

The old man made a gesture of impatience. "For God's sake, Harvey!" he said.

Harvey said: "Well, listen: I want to build a hydroelectric plant near the Falls on the river. . . . You just take that in for a minute," he went on at John's look of surprise. "If the big cities have them, why not the small ones? And if the small ones, why not Persepolis? That's the first part of it. Here's the next." He pulled out some papers from the sheaf in front of him. "First, the

location—there's a farm out by the Falls that belongs to the Bank. It's run by a man named Mundy." He looked up at John's grunt. "You know him?"

"Never mind," the old man said. "Go ahead."

". . . Anyway, it's an ideal site for the plant. I've had engineers from the best firm in Chicago go over it—paid them out of my own pocket too. . . . Now take a look at these." He pulled out the drawer again and took out a roll of blueprints. "Drawn up by the same people. They'll make a power-plant equal to anything in the country. A beauty!" He added somberly: "If we ever get it built."

"Never mind," John Cantrell said. "Just you tell me, Harvey, where you plan to get the money."

"Sure, I'll tell you, but if you're going to be like Father about it, I might as well save my wind."

The old man simply waited, and Harvey went on: "You know as well as I do where the money's coming from. From the Bank, that's where." He shuffled the papers forward. "Some of it from us—yes, I had you in this too, but I thought I had to wait to see how Father took it—but most of it from the Bank. A loan to us, the incorporators. And maybe a public sale of some of the stock—a small part. The rest divided evenly among the three of us. Why, I even went so far as to have the incorporation papers drawn up. But it would mean—d'you realize what?—a new industry for the city, more people working, cheaper power for the Iron Works and the factories, and real profits for the Bank." He tapped the surface of the desk gently with his forefinger. "It'll be the biggest thing that's hit this city in years. No other city this size in the state will be able to compete with it if we get cheap power. . . . But hell!" he groaned, the excitement going out of him, "I get my behind spanked by Father for mentioning it." He looked moodily at his cousin who stared alertly back at him, plucking with restless fingers at the cuff of his empty sleeve.

Here I've been mooning in my book over the brave pioneers,

John Cantrell was thinking, and there's one right here talking to me. But he said slowly: "Your father's right, Harvey. Now wait a minute, and don't get excited. It is a gamble, and you know it."

Harvey looked at him sullenly.

"I would chance it, though," the old man went on, "if it was our money, not the depositors', that we were risking."

"We haven't got enough," Harvey said. "Not unless you—?"

"Me? Where would I get it, Harvey? I got some, but not enough to build a power-plant on."

"But listen," Harvey said desperately, "listen to me a minute." His voice roughened. "What do you think a bank is anyway? Just a place where you lock money up for safekeeping? Then people might as well bury it, and it would be just as safe. No—people put their money in a bank, so that the bank'll work their money to make more money for them."

"Of course, Harvey. But there's a difference between working their money and gambling it."

"Gambling it!" Harvey said violently. "It's not a gamble when you can calculate the future, is it? Look!—here's the figures on what it'll cost to build the plant and produce the power. And here's figures on how much power we can sell. Conservative figures, on purpose. For God's sake, will you give them some study before you say no?"

"Yes," John told him, "I will. Because as I told you, I like the scheme. And if it reads as good as you make it sound—well, I'll make your father see it too, if I have to bust a blood vessel."

"You may have to bust his head," Harvey said. "But you really promise to study the whole thing?"

"I told you I would, Harvey." He caught the younger man's eye. "But on one condition."

"What?" Harvey asked eagerly. "Tell me."

"That if the three of us go into it, we'll risk all our own funds before we borrow from the Bank's," John Cantrell said slowly, and watched his cousin's face. If he refuses, he thought. . . .

"Certainly," Harvey said at once. "Every nickel I've got, for

my part. Maybe that'll make you understand how much I believe in this scheme."

"That's what I wanted to know, Harvey."

Harvey looked at him. "You're a smart one," he said. "But there's still Father—"

"I can handle your father. From the time we were young men I could always put the right twist to him." Except, he remembered, that I couldn't make him go off to the War with me. He rose, picking up the sheaf of papers that Harvey pushed towards him. "Everything here?" he asked.

"Everything but Father," Harvey said.

The old man's hawkish face broke into a quick grin. "Well, I'll have him wrapped up and delivered." He shook hands with Harvey, and went out.

It was just barely short of a gamble he decided that evening when he pushed the papers wearily away from him. He could not blame Will for turning it down. It would take a lot of money, and the returns, he could tell, would be slow. But if it succeeded, and the chances were better than even that it would,—well, it would be the biggest thing that had hit Persepolis in a long long time. The biggest, and the best. Not only for the Cantrells and their bank, but for all the people of the city. He liked Harvey's thinking of the city's as well as the Bank's good. That was what he wanted, too.

Just the same, to risk so much money. . . . He shook his head impatiently and thought: Harvey's right. You've got to take chances. And though he would scarcely admit it to himself because it seemed unreasonable, the truth was that the idea of doing a job of work again was exciting. He was sick and tired of loafing. Godalmighty, he had been chafing at the bit for the last four years, and it had taken more out of him, he told himself, than if he had been working his head off. This was a good job that deserved to be done, a job that would call on all a man's wits and strength. And if it was risky, if it was dangerous, why, all the better. It made the work all the more exciting and satisfying.

Hold your horses, he told himself suddenly, remembering that it was other people's money as well as his own that he was going to use.

He got up, and began to get ready for bed. He would not be so sharp for the scheme, he thought, as he struggled into his night-shirt, if he had not been loafing for so long. But he was sick of sitting around in his coffin before his time, waiting for the touch that would command him to lie down and die. Yes, a man who could work and wanted to work and yet didn't work was practically dead. He got into bed, and knew impatiently that he was going to say yes to Harvey.

It did not take him long to win Will over to Harvey's scheme. He was surprised, he had expected a struggle to convince him, but Will had yielded suddenly and tiredly, saying: "All right—if you and Harvey want it so bad, I'll give in." It was not, after all, his surrender that they wanted, but his support of the enterprise. He was like a man beaten, not like a man won over, so that they had no real satisfaction in his yielding to them.

"That's the way he is," Harvey said moodily.

"He'll feel different after things get under way," John answered.

So, while their plans went swiftly forward, Will was apathetic. He signed necessary documents, he listened to them politely when they discussed problems, he agreed or disagreed according to his own views, but he had fallen into a kind of numbness of feeling, a failure of interest not only in their great scheme, but also in the usual business of the Bank. The reins had been taken from his nerveless fingers, and though he still went through the motions of holding them, he made no attempt really to grasp them again. And he aged. To Harvey, who knew him so intimately, who had lived with him nearly every day of his life, there was something frightening in his father's aging. It was not like watching one man prepare to leave, it was like watching a generation, an epoch, pass, and when he dug around among the old papers and records of the Bank that he was gathering for John's history, he sometimes

paused and read among the yellowed sheets, and linked without thinking his father with his grandfather, for whom Harvey was named, and with his great-grandfather, Philip, who had founded the Bank.

On some days his father did not feel well enough to come down to the Bank and gave in readily enough when Doctor Hinckley, calling to look at Harvey's mother, Eulalia, who was a wheelchair invalid, came in to examine him too. Later, the doctor, talking to Harvey on the telephone, told him that his father was all right for a man of his age—a little flutter of the heart, but nothing to worry about much, though it would be a good idea if Will did not get too excited about anything. Harvey felt a little better then, but a sense of guilt sharpened within him whenever he looked into his father's lacklustre eyes and noted the yellowing of his skin.

After a time it came to him that his father was dying. One day he shamefacedly said so to John who snapped at him: "To a man under forty, a man over seventy is always dying."

Nevertheless, Harvey knew why his father looked so bad. It was because Harvey had treated him in this scheme of theirs as if he were really dying, had pushed and butted at him as if he were so much dead lumber to get him out of the way instead of arguing with him man to man as if they were of the same age and generation. He realized that he had not talked to his father for a long time as he had talked to John Cantrell, but had gone at him impatiently and brusquely—maybe stupidly. But how else, he asked himself, could he have moved his father to action? Should he have dropped the whole matter instead of enlisting the support of John and the other bank directors, dropped the whole scheme and eaten his own heart out? Should he, at thirty-seven, a generation after his father's seventy, have dropped himself down into the yellow dusty papers of the vault, and clapped his hands over his ears to try to shut out a drumbeat that would not be shut out because it rang in his blood and came, not from outside, but from within?

The old men dream, but the young men act, he told himself, staring out of the window into the sultry August night and listening for his father's foot on the stairs as he came upstairs after his reading in the library. It came to him, too, that in some ways his fourteen-year-old Phil and his father were alike. They both had the same way of hesitation at a question instead of the blunt response in word or action that he and old John had. And both of them were great readers, drugging themselves with the printed word till their eyes blurred, and they moved trancelike after they had finished a book. He would have to do something about Phil before it was too late. . . . No, it was not that his father was of a different generation, but that he was a different kind of person. He did not like action, he had no use for action, and when he did act, it was in ways that were all so far settled from the actions that had once grooved them, that they were only automatic movements. As for himself, his eyes turned out and forward, not in and back—and yes, it was the only way for him. Maybe there were some men who could do both—maybe John Cantrell was one—who could turn one eye in and back and the other out and forward and still know what they were doing, but such men were uncommon and he was not one.

Balance was what was wanted, he thought sleepily, balance like a bank balance where the debits matched the assets to a penny. But men were figures only in a manner of speaking, and they never achieved—none of them—anything more than a trial balance when they took inventory and made up a statement. "Should've been a book-reader, a philosopher," he mumbled to himself, turning his back on the window and getting ready to fall asleep, "but then I wouldn't 've been a business man," and his thoughts turned to the torn earth of the Mundy farm along the bank of the Quesota, and he saw in his mind the great building throwing its deep shadow and the shadows of its power lines across the countryside, and heard the deep humming beat of the turbines while the light and power poured their riches into the city.

Just before he fell asleep in the sultry night, he heard his

father's footsteps groping on the stairs, but they seemed to be going down, not up. After he fell asleep he dreamed briefly that he found his father sitting among the yellow papers in the vault.

By late August the excavating at the Mundy farm was well under way. The farmhouse had become headquarters for John Cantrell and the other men in charge of the work, and all day long the workers tramped back and forth into the hollow house, asking directions and taking orders while they bent over the blueprints, and hurrying back to the job of digging. The faded wallpaper of the rooms grew smudged and dirty, and the soft pine of the floors splintered under the heavy heels. Steadily up the Quessota came the barges loaded with lumber, cement, and brick; its clear water was yellow with the subsoil of the farm that the diggers heaped along its banks, covering the alder and hazel and willow that had grown there so rankly.

The complaints that came into the City Hall from the farmers who lived down below the Mundy farm about the fouling of the water were handled by Francis Connell as chairman of the city's Utilities Commission. In reply he wrote tactful letters, asserting that the Farmers & Mechanics Light and Power Company had pledged itself to the Utilities Commission to make payment in full for any damages if proof of damage was offered, and then went on to say that the discoloration of the water was only temporary and that perhaps it was good citizenship to suffer such inconveniences for a time for the sake of the many citizens in the township who would eventually profit by the building of the power-plant and the bringing of light and power into the homes, offices, farms, and factories of the township. Harvey Cantrell thought so much of the letter that he asked Francis to send a copy of it signed "Pro Bono Publico" to the *Chronicle*.

In its editorial columns the *Chronicle* called favorable attention to the letter of "Pro Bono Publico" and indirectly puffed the sale of the power-plant's stock in the city by appealing to the patriotism of Persepolis's citizens to throw all their support to what the editor called "this worthy and public-spirited enterprise un-

dertaken by the most respected and able leaders of our community." From time to time also, the *Chronicle* reported progress in the building of the plant:

The latest report from Mr. John Cantrell, well-known Civil War veteran of this city, in charge of construction at the new power-plant, now rising rapidly on the banks of the historic Quessota, shows that nearly two hundred men are being employed. Needless to say, the enterprise promises to give work for many more months to come to the laborers of this city. It is estimated that more than fifteen trades, not counting engineers and draughtsmen, are busily at work. It is a matter of pride to the managers of the work that except for the engineering plans and the larger pieces of machinery all the labor and supplies have been contracted for through local companies. A good many of our citizens have enjoyed a Sunday outing to the busy scene.

The sale of stock to the public had been good. What pleased John Cantrell most was that so many of the shares had been taken up by the people of the city. Harvey, too, was pleased that the offering had been so quickly subscribed, and that there was no delay in getting hold of their working capital. His father, oddly as it seemed to Harvey, had quibbled about the shares given to Francis Connell and carried on the books in Josie's name, but Harvey had said impatiently: "Look here, Father, don't be small-minded. We're under obligation to Connell in many ways. He's got lines into the State Legislature as well as power in City Hall. If you don't want the Gas Company's lobby up at the Capitol to throw a last-minute monkey wrench into our plans, you'd better figure that Connell is cheap at almost any price he asks. . . . In a way, it's luck for us that he's marrying Josie. You can count the shares as a wedding present if you want to."

His father had run his hand over his parched yellowing cheek. "Well, you'll have your way about it, Harvey," he said doubtfully, "but I don't like it, and I never will. It's not a safe, never

mind honest, way of doing business. People, if they found out, could put a very ugly name to your transactions with Connell."

"You're 'way behind the times, Father. . . . That's all I can say," Harvey had answered brusquely, and gone out of the room.

When he came out onto the porch, his mother, sitting in the wheelchair, put out her hand, and said to him: "You ought not to be quarreling with your father, Harvey. I could hear your loud voices 'way out here. Annabelle tells me that you're always at each other these days. All these new business schemes of yours won't amount to much, in my opinion, if they mean you and your father can't agree."

"Belle talks too much," he said in sudden irritation. "Father and I understand each other well enough." He patted her thin shoulder and went down the steps of the porch towards the summer-house in the yard.

"Now, don't be long," she called after him. "Dinner will be on the table soon."

He waved in reply, and went into the summer-house.

Phil looked up vaguely from his book, mumbled, "H'lo, Father," and bent his head to his book again.

"How'd you like to come out to the plant with me one of these days?" Harvey asked him.

Phil looked up. "What'd you say, Father?"

He blinked, and Harvey exclaimed: "For God's sake, can't you put that book away while I'm talking to you?—I asked you if you'd like to go out to the plant with me one of these days."

"I guess so," Phil said.

"I should think you'd be curious to see what's going on out there. God knows we've had enough talk about it in the house."

Phil was looking down at the book on his lap. "I meant to go out once," he said, "but—well, I had somethin' to do."

"Yes, reading another book, I suppose?"

Phil did not reply, and his father said: "Well?"

"I guess so," Phil said. "I don't remember."

He looked tormented, and his father sat down beside him and

said with kindness: "Now look here, Phil. It's a fine thing to read, but you can overdo it like anything else. You want to get out more, get to know people, get to understand them. Some day you'll be taking my place—running the Bank, the Iron Works, the hydroelectric plant—and you'll have to know how to mix with other people, how to do business with them." He put his hand lightly on Phil's arm. "You ought to start now to get some idea of the big responsibilities you're going to have some day, Phil. Understand?"

"I guess so," Phil said, looking past his father.

"You want to try to balance things, son," Harvey said. "Here school'll begin in a couple of weeks and you'll have plenty of reading to do. . . . Now I want you to promise me you won't read quite so much. Try to get interested in doing things, too, Phil. It's not healthy to be lopsided. And give your eyes a rest, too." He laughed. "At least, keep your glasses clean." He took the glasses from Phil's nose, and said: "For God's sake, how can you see through the muck on these?" He pulled out his handkerchief and polished the lenses briskly, while Phil peered nearsightedly at him. "You'll be blind as a bat," Harvey said, handing the glasses back to him.

A voice from the veranda called to them, and Harvey got up. "Come on, Phil. Dinner." As they came out of the summer-house, he put his arm across his son's shoulders, and they walked that way up to the house together. But Phil's shoulders were stiff under his father's arm, and Harvey thought: I just can't get to him. . . .

JOSIE CANTRELL had not wanted her father to go to work again, but he had snapped: "Quit babying me, Josie. Look at me, I'm hale and hearty enough. For the first time in four years I feel wide awake." When she mentioned the history to him, he said: "That's all right too. . . . I'll work on it spare time. Besides, I'll be able to do better with it if I'm doing something to make history in the city, instead of just studying what those who made history did."

And because he did look well, she did not argue with him. "Well, just see that you don't overdo," she told him, and left him to leaf through the bulky heap of papers that Harvey had dug up for him at the Bank.

What his work out at the construction was to be he did not know when he started. Harvey and he had agreed that he would superintend the work, but the first few days he had done little, except twiddle his fingers and watch the building material coming in and being unloaded. On the first day he arrived, he had found Harry Mundy just moving the last load of furniture out of the farmhouse. He was a little fussed, he had no notion of what greeting he might get from Mundy, but the farmer had been equable enough, saying: "It's all right. In a way, it's a burden off my back. Maybe we'll be better off in the city. . . ."

"If there's anything I can do . . ." John offered, but the other said, smiling: "No favors, Mr. Cantrell," and John, exasperated unreasonably by his calmness, went past him into the empty rooms.

After a time he found plenty to do because people took it for granted that he was there to manage them and came and put responsibilities upon him. Gradually, and to his complete satisfaction because he felt himself being useful, he took over the general but practical management of the whole construction. And as he worked into his job, so he worked himself in among the men, at first unconsciously and then deliberately as he became curious about them. When he first began to work, he had taken the trolley home at lunch time, but the ride back and forth had taken so much time that he had taken to bringing his lunch with him and eating with the rest of the men. He had begun by sitting with the office-workers, the timekeepers, the draughtsmen, and the engineers, but after a while he had drifted off to talk occasionally with some of the laborers, the pick-and-shovel men, the bricklayers, and others. At first they were embarrassed when he came around, but gradually, because he felt himself to be one of them, all doing a job of work together, and because, on his side at least, he did not

seem to recognize any difference between him and them, they sometimes forgot to think of him as the boss and sometimes talked to him pretty freely.

And what they said troubled him. Among them all he found a common belief: they believed in success, money-success for themselves—he could understand that all right, it was natural enough—but he disliked their feeling that it was their due from the country and that they owed the country nothing, as if all the promises had been from the beginning on the country's side. He had been out of touch with everyday people, he decided, as he talked and sometimes argued with them while they chewed their thick sandwiches and drank up the bottles of beer they had hung in the well for cooling—yes, he had been out of touch, and so he had idealized them.

Now something of his faith in them wavered a little. He sometimes despised them for their failure to understand how much they owed the country, their blindness and ingratitude to the country that had given them so much already. What right had they, he asked himself, thinking of his imaginary conversation with Marius on the Fourth of July, what right had they to complain and ask still more from the country when the freedom she had given them already was beyond price? It had come to them too easily, he reflected: they had not had to work for their freedom. But let it be lost to them, let it be taken from them as it had been taken from them in the countries they and their fathers had fled from, then they would know, then they would appreciate the country and the debt they owed her.

What they wanted of the country was money, lots of money. They didn't care how they got it; they believed that the country didn't care how they got it. And they believed that a man could not get as much money as he wanted without being ruthless in the getting, and that people who did have money had gotten it unscrupulously. When he talked of hard work and equal opportunity, he saw that they listened to him politely, but they veiled their eyes from him, and he knew that they were wondering if he

had gotten his money as honestly as he argued they could get theirs. They listened to him, he saw, with an air of polite tolerance, as if to say: "Maybe . . . maybe. But even if you didn't get it honest, it's okay with us. We understand . . . we know. We'll get ours, too. Somehow. . . ." It exasperated him that they thought only of what they could get out of the country, and not what they might do for it, exasperated him still more that they thought of the power-plant only as a money-maker for the Bank and its owners, and not as an instrument of their, the public's, good. When he said this, they grinned a little from a hidden derision, and shook his satisfaction in his thought and his work.

But, he told himself, now that his life had moved out of the backwater into which he had withdrawn it, he could not expect it to be placid, undisturbed by the currents in which he was still charting his course. And he began to wonder then whether he was really charting his course, or was being content merely to move with the currents to which he had committed himself. His wonder sharpened into meditation one day early in September when during the noon hour he came upon one of the Italian diggers talking to a black-bearded Jew, a junk-peddler, and offering to sell him something which glinted in the sun. It was a discolored oblong plate, and the colored boy who sat beside the peddler on the wagon said as John came up:

"He says it's silver. Will you tell him to let Mr. Bandler look at it? We wouldn't steal it from him."

"Let's have a look at it," John said, and after a moment's hesitation the laborer put the metal plate in his hand. "Why, there's writing on it," the old man went on, and picking up a stick, pried the dirt out of the florid cursive engraving. "It's a name on it." He turned to the Italian. "Where'd you find it?"

"Diggin' littla hill," Massimo Cascione said, pointing back at the deep-gouged knoll.

The old man recalled that the Mundy boy had told him that his grandfather was buried on the farm. The silver oblong he had recognized as a coffin plate, and the name on it was the name of

an old friend: Joseph Evelyn Mundy 1827-1889.

"From coffin," Massimo said, his face somber.

"Well, now, look here," John said, "this man was a friend of mine, he's the father of the man who owned this place. I wouldn't want it sold for junk. It ought to be given to its rightful owner. . . ." He took out his wallet, and drew out a five-dollar bill. "All right?" he asked, giving the bill to Massimo. John looked up at the peddler and the colored boy. "You don't mind?"

Morris Bandler shrugged his shoulders. "We don't mind," he said, "why should we mind?"

John turned to Massimo. "You find anything else?" He hesitated. "Any bones?"

Massimo smiled sadly. "Nothin'—nothin' left. A littla dust." He bent over and scrabbled up a palmful of dust from their feet and flung it sidewise into the wind where it dissolved. "Thassall," he said, "dust."

He turned to go, and John turned with him, saying good-by to the others. He reflected that they were building the plant in old Joe Mundy's dust, but he said to himself: "It's good that we're building something good on this dust. He cleared the way—he made the land. It's good that we're building something good after him."

Massimo touched his arm, and said: "'S too bad, too bad. Whatsa matter tear up farm? 'S good farm. 'S good land." He bent to the ground again, and his hard dark fingers tore up a piece of turf. He turned it over, and poking his finger into the moist black earth that clung to the grass rootlets, said: "Good." He rubbed the earth between his fingers, and it made a dark brown smear. He lifted the earth to his nostrils and sniffed at it. "'S a good smell too," he said. He held the turf out to John, and the old man obediently sniffed at it.

"It does smell good," he said, groping for the footing of talk between them.

Massimo nodded gravely. "'S good land. Why for you spoil?" He looked accusingly at John.

"We're not spoiling it," John told him. "We're making something good here. A big electric plant for lights in all the houses and power for all the factories."

The other spat. "Make a big stink. Thassall. More fact'ries, more stink. Me, I'm not work in fact'ry. Only crazy man work in fact'ry. Me, I'm gonna work in ground, plant, make somethin' good grow from ground."

"Well, look here, Mister, we can't all be farmers," John said.

Still holding the piece of turf up to his gaze, Massimo said: "Make fact'ry in city—lotsa place in city. Here you dirty up, you spoila good land. Me, I have this place, I make a good farm."

"You a farmer?" John asked in surprise.

"Ho—ho!" Massimo laughed. "'S good joke. Sure I'm farm'. In Old Country I'm besta farm'—grapevine, squash, olive trees. Pretty soon I'm have farm again." He wiped his hot brown face with his sleeve. "In Old Country, my papa fight for Garibaldi because Garibaldi say all poor man must have own farm. Poor papa, the soldiers shoot him—piff, paff!" With a sly smile, he turned to John. "You shoot man who have this farm?"

"Godalmighty, no! He just couldn't make a go of it—so we had to take it away from him. The Bank did, that is."

"See?" said Massimo. "Joosta same in Old Country." He dropped the turf which he had been squeezing in his hand as if to extract its juices, and drew his finger sharply across his thick brown throat.

"No!" John said quickly. "No, that's wrong, Mister—we didn't cut his throat for it. It was all fair and square."

The other tapped a blunt forefinger on his arm. "Farm' sella da farm to you?"

John felt the familiar exasperation rise inside him. "It's really none of your business, Mister," he said. "But if you want to know, the Bank took it over. He couldn't pay the interest on his mortgages, it was hopeless. He was lucky to get what he did."

Massimo nodded knowingly. "'S same t'ing," he said. "Joosta like Old Country."

John shook his head at him impatiently.

"When I'm own farm," Massimo said firmly, "nobody take away my farm. I'm gonna cut to pieces lawyer, banker, who take away farms. Yes, yes, cut to pieces," and suddenly bursting into laughter, turned and drew his finger across John's throat. "Cut to pieces," he said, still laughing, and walked off.

"Crazy as a loon," John said, staring after him. He looked at the coffin plate in his hand and wondered just who was responsible for Mundy's losing his farm. "It was fair and square," he said to himself, "fair and square."

The result of his talks with the workingmen and his little argument with Massimo Cascione was that during the cool September evenings he turned with interest and vigor to the old Bank documents Harvey had let him take. He did not feel that he had to justify the Bank's actions, but he wanted to estimate the extent of its usefulness and what it had done in Persepolis besides enriching its officers and shareholders. He wanted to prove, he told himself, that the Bank had done more for the city's growth and the good of its citizens than it had for the individuals who owned it. As he studied the documents he began to see the Bank as a living organism that had grown as naturally from the configuration of the country as had its forest or its hills. Once the ground in which it lay dormant had been scratched, it had grown and thrust itself up into the life of the city because it was a need of the people of the city, and while it flourished, the city flourished, and if one weakened, then the other must weaken too. This was the conviction he had come to as he began the chapter:

The Farmers and Mechanics Bank, the oldest in Persepolis, was established in 1835 largely through the efforts of Philip Cantrell aided somewhat in the enterprise by his brother Thomas. Philip Cantrell first drew up and circulated for his associates in the venture the petition "praying for the establishment of a banking company in the City of Persepolis to be called the Farmers and Mechanics Bank." This petition was presented and read before the State Assembly on November

14, 1834, and in the afternoon of the same day, a bill was introduced in the House to incorporate the Bank. Knowing the temper of the Assembly towards new banking ventures, Philip Cantrell went to some pains in his endeavour to insure the passage of the bill. On the evening of January 22, 1835, as a result of a notice inserted by "A Patriot" in the *Persepolis True Citizen* of the previous Saturday, the citizens of *Persepolis* favoring the new bank met at the Congress Hotel where a memorial to the Legislature was drawn up, expressing the earnest wish of its subscribers for the passage of the bill. The memorial was presented to the Assembly by the Hon. William S. Backus on the 17th of the following month. In March the bill came before the House, and on March 21, 1835 finally passed the Senate by a vote of 10 to 4, when it immediately became a law under the caption: "An Act to Incorporate the Farmers and Mechanics Bank at *Persepolis*."

The incorporators of the Bank were Philip Cantrell, Thomas Cantrell, William Bascomb, Amos Sutton, Benjamin A. Tuttle, and George B. Macklin. These also were the first Board of Directors. They determined that the capital of the Bank should be \$50,000, and advertized, therefore, in the *True Citizen* that on May 12th at 10 o'clock in the morning the subscription books would be open for 5 consecutive days at the house of Philip Cantrell, and that \$5.00 would be required to be paid on each \$50 share subscribed. The capital stock of 1,000 shares having been fully subscribed, the Board of Directors held their first meeting on June 15, 1835, and organized by electing Philip Cantrell president and John Cunningham treasurer.

On October 24, 1835, at 9 o'clock in the morning, the doors of the Farmers and Mechanics Bank were first thrown open to the public for the transaction of business. Almost at once the Bank proved its usefulness to the citizens of *Persepolis*. It offered a safe deposit for their monies, and saved them the effort of the tedious journey to and from Stanton, the county

seat, 42 miles away, where hitherto they had gone to deposit their funds and transact their business. It eased the flow of credit and commerce, and quickly became the means by which a number of new industrial and commercial enterprises added to the resources of the city.

Yet scarcely had the Bank operated eighteen months when without warning it suffered a staggering blow. In May, 1837, a financial crisis without parallel in its history swept the country. Business was suspended as credit suddenly withered, and all confidence was destroyed as banks, great and small, in every state of the Union were driven to suspend payments in specie. The stream of credit and commerce was dried up by the practical destruction of the Bank of the United States and by the plethora of paper currency flooding out of the innumerable State Banks. When the New York and Philadelphia banks stopped payments in specie, the small and struggling Farmers and Mechanics was forced to suspend payments also. In the perilous weeks that followed it was feared that the Bank must forfeit its charter because of its suspension of specie payments, but as time passed and public confidence was restored in the stability of the Bank, the danger ceased. The Bank resumed the payment of specie for its notes in small amounts, and wiped out its loss of nearly \$8,000 in promissory notes and other such securities by reducing its capital stock accordingly.

Thereafter the Bank increased in strength and usefulness, its resources growing constantly as with its valuable aid Persepolis also grew. It was not until the country was gripped once again by the terrible panic of 1857 that—

And here for the time being he had to let his writing rest because Josie was to be married on the 10th of October and the whole house was undergoing a general refurbishing. But he put his manuscript aside reluctantly, for with excitement he had begun to understand the city's drive towards its ripening, was beginning

to grasp how the spirit of its people interlocked with the time and the place of the city and with the great structure of the nation. A sense of Destiny looming behind the facts and figures he had been studying obsessed him, and he felt that invisible powers and forces greater than all men together steered their lives while men moved and turned in the current thinking that they directed themselves, but eddied always into the great stream without knowing they were pushed or what was pushing them. And as the great sense of history seized him, he wondered more and more how he could explain the life that had seeded itself and flowered in the city and spread almost as if aimlessly, but yet so powerfully. As the Bank had seemed to come alive for him, so the city too now seemed to reveal herself as a vast and intricate creature living her own secret history by her own laws, locked tightly in a million ways among the thousands of its inhabitants so that no life lived alone, except by an illusion that was self-fostered and gave to each life a dream of its single freedom. These thoughts disturbed and frightened him. Wondering how much of his own life was free of the secret pull of time and chance, he felt at times that he would like somehow to assert himself as if in defiance, as if to resist whatever invisible Mover sought to seize and sweep him, unknowing and unwilling, into the flow of the unbounded stream that seemed to be a great sea and yet flowed with relentless smoothness to its invisible outlet.

He felt all the more strongly that in moving out into the current again his life had gotten out of his own control when suddenly a few days before Josie's marriage, his long friendship with Marius Schaeffer was abruptly and painfully broken. The break dimmed his pleasure in the wedding and troubled him for a long time with a sad bewilderment.

What with being so busy out at the river and scratching his head over his history, he had not seen Marius for quite a while, and so one night right after supper he stopped in at Marius's house, looking forward to a pleasant evening of their usual lively talk. Going up the walk, he met Albert, who, still remembering the

Fourth of July fight that the old man had stopped, gave him a shamefaced grin and a mumbled "H'lo, Mr. Cantrell," as he slipped past him on his way out to the corner to meet the rest of the gang. Marius, the old man recalled afterwards, had appeared glad enough to see him. They talked casually for about half an hour, and then Marius went out to the kitchen to get some beer. When he came back, he said:

"I was just thinking, John, how well you're looking since you've been at work again."

"Yup, I'm getting my second wind, I guess," the old man said. "I was just drying up when Harvey pulled me to my feet with this power-plant job."

Marius busied himself, pouring the beer. "Things going well, are they?"

"Couldn't be better, what with Josie becoming Mrs. Francis Connell in a few days."

"He's worked with you on this scheme, has he?—Connell, I mean," Marius asked.

"Oh, he's been helpful now and then," John said. "But, of course, his interests are quite a bit outside ours."

Marius handed him a glass of beer. "What's he do anyway?"

The old man stared at him. "What's he do? That's a funny question, Marius. You know he's a lawyer. Councilman, too. He's got enough to keep him busy."

There was a little silence between them. They could hear the boys shouting outside. "What makes you ask that anyway?" John asked, his tone curious and a little challenging.

"Oh, nothing much," Marius said. Then he lowered his voice, and his look slipped past John's. "I don't want you to think I've been discussing your private affairs, John, but there's been talk downtown about you and Connell."

"Talk?" The old man looked puzzled. "What kind of talk? What could they say?"

"Maybe Harvey Cantrell could tell you," Marius said solemnly.

The old man laughed. "What're you getting at, Marius? It's not

like you to beat around the bush like this."

His friend said slowly: "They're saying that Connell's on your pay roll, and that the Cantrells wouldn't have got anywhere with their scheme if it weren't for Connell's political pull at the City Hall and the State House."

"Godalmighty!" John said. "You had me worried there for a minute. . . . I thought it was something serious." He laughed again. "Thought you were going to tell me that Francis was already married to a lady with ten kids!"

Marius did not smile. "It came to me on pretty good authority, John," he said.

John Cantrell stammered in his bewilderment: "What? What came to you on good authority? Godalmighty, Marius, you got me spinning like a top. You don't believe that rubbish, do you?"

His friend put his beer glass down and leaned forward earnestly. "The talk is, John, that some of the people on the City Council had been working for this plant to be a municipal one, wanted the city to raise the money with a bond-issue, and have the city own and run it. . . . But Harvey Cantrell got wind of the idea when it was mentioned last spring and just took the play away. Connell's supposed to be your man, working for you, and so he downed the idea in the Council even before it came up to a discussion, never mind a vote."

"It's crazy talk!" John said. "You don't put any faith in it!"

"The idea was," Marius said, still slowly and deliberately, "the idea was that it would be a non-profit enterprise, and that the rates would be as low as they could be—lower than Harvey Cantrell will have them."

John exclaimed: "But how could Francis keep the idea from being brought up?"

"How could he? You can't be such an innocent, John. . . . With the proper pressure and a few dollars spread around among the right people?"

"You're accusing us of bribery!"

"I make no accusation, John," Marius said. "Not of you, at any

rate. I can well believe that Harvey Cantrell would not want you to know what he's been doing."

"If you accuse him, then you accuse me too. . . . I tell you, Marius, you've been taken in by the flimsiest kind of cock-and-bull story!"

"But the fact is, John, that the plant could have been built by the city as well as by you. And the profits and benefit of it would have gone to all the people of this city instead of to your crowd alone."

"Crowd? You talk as if we were a bunch of bandits!"

Marius said: "You know what my ideas about capital are, John."

"Capital! So it boils down to that argument again, does it?" John Cantrell burst out. "Listen, Marius, I've told you this before, and I'll tell you again: this country was built up by men who worked for themselves first because it's the nature of man to work for himself before he works for others. But they worked to a plan of self-government that tries to keep the balance between what was right for a man to take for himself as the reward of his work and what it was wrong for him to take. And it's been a good plan too. Why, this country has done more for the people in it in a hundred and fifty years than Europe's done in more'n a thousand!"

Marius tried to speak, but the old man waved him imperiously to silence. "Just let me finish, Marius. . . . You don't have to tell me that men are selfish, I know it as well as you. But so long as men can make laws that will keep them from tearing each other to pieces for the satisfaction of their selfishness, then I'll believe in this country's way of making a living. And so will the thousands and thousands of others who've come over here because of a promise of freedom such as they could never dream of in Europe."

His fingers plucked at the cuff of his empty sleeve. "If they work for money, it's because money's the visible sign of what they've accomplished and of their freedom. Godalmighty, they'd still work in your heavenly State, your plush Utopia, for a reward

of their labors! And if there wasn't money to work for, they'd work for something else—for power, maybe. Political power most likely. You complain now that the country's run by politicians, but in your kind of country every man would be a politician scheming and conniving for the power by which he could prove himself a free man and not a piece of something called the State!" His voice rose. "Wake up, Marius. Your fancy dream is nothing but a nightmare."

"Is that so?" Marius said excitedly. "Well, you're the dreamy one, not me. Because men are selfish the way you say, and some of them are strong, and some are not. And some of them are so strong, that you can't fence them in with laws. You take a hog and put him in a pen and he'll eat everything around him. If he wants more, and a hog always does, he'll find a weak place in the fence and break out, and gobble whatever's in sight, and chase everything else that wants to eat away from his feeding. . . . Chase him back to the sty and he'll grunt as if you were killing him, and be a good hog again. Turn your back, and he's out again, bigger and stronger than before. So big and strong he'll put his tusks into you, if you don't keep out of his way. . . . Keep out of his way, and he'll eat everything in sight, even his own children, and everything else'll slowly starve to death on the scraps he's left behind him. So the only way to do is to gang up on him and kill him—see to it that he never has a chance to get out of control again. Then everything else in the countryside'd get fat because there'd be enough for all. Maybe you think it's all right for the money hogs to eat up the countryside, but when there's nothing else to get fat off, they start eating other living things. . . . And that's where they've got to be stopped. The weak must be protected against the strong, and the only way is for the weak to join together and crush the hogs just by the weight of their numbers. . . ."

John Cantrell said stiffly: "I never thought of myself as a hog yet. . . . We—Harvey and me—had the notion in this scheme that we were doing something for the others—giving them work,

giving them a chance to make a living, doing something for the city. I don't like to be called a hog."

"Don't get huffy now," Marius said, "it was just a manner of speaking, that's all."

"Does no good to take the name back," John said. "The thought's still there." He got up. "I'm going on to see Harvey now and see what truth there is in what you've been telling me."

Marius said: "You know I wouldn't say it unless it's true. . . . I don't like being called a liar anymore'n you like being called a hog."

"You could be mistaken, though," John said. "You might have misled yourself, you're so anxious to find fault—yes, and make trouble."

"That's no way to talk to me," Marius said angrily. "If I really wanted to make trouble—" He paused as if regretting what he had started to say.

"You might as well finish," John said. His legs were trembling a little. "A half-threat is the noise a windbag makes."

Marius rose and faced him. "You'd better control yourself," he said. All the ruddiness was gone out of his face. "I know that a man who just talks for his principles isn't worth much." John said nothing, just looked at him steadily, and Marius went on quickly: "I'm going to run against Connell in November for Councilman."

"You are!"

Marius nodded. "And I'm going to make a public issue of this plant you're putting up."

"Why, you idiot!" John exclaimed, his rage bursting from him at last.

"There's been enough name-calling tonight," Marius said. "But I'm going to tell the people of this city the truth about your business with Connell."

"I'll jail you for slander," John said. He could hardly speak with rage.

"I'll stand by the truth," Marius said.

"Why, you—!" John began, but at that moment Emily Schaeffer came into the room.

"You're not going so soon, John?" she asked, and then aware of the tension between the two men, exclaimed: "You've been quarreling!"

"I must go. . . . Something important," John mumbled, not meeting her eyes, and before she could speak again, said: "Good night," and went quickly out.

He walked towards Harvey's house, mumbling to himself in rage. The night breeze cooled his hot face, and after a time he began to turn over in his mind what Marius and he had said to each other. He was amazed at how quickly they had flown at each other's throat—almost, he reflected, as if their argument had not been the cause of their break, but its excuse. If he had not gone to work again, he told himself, they could have argued their contrary beliefs, as they had a thousand times before, till the cows came home, and still have parted good friends. But now that he had turned from belief to action, it was as if he had waked Marius to action, too, as though he had shamed Marius into testing his faith, too.

He had an impulse then to turn back, to go and tell Marius that their friendship meant more to him than their principles. But no—he was already caught in the rush of the current, he could not turn back except by such a wrench as would turn him inside out. It would be an admission that he was a thief and that Harvey was a thief, and that Josie's husband-to-be was their hired go-between. He shivered. And if he did go back, would Marius understand—how could he make him understand that he had returned not because he was afraid of a risk of his principles, but because he wanted to preserve the communion of their thought that had clashed and divided and clashed again without a hurt to either one, without a hurt, he realized now, because there had been no acts born out of their beliefs that up to now had been anchored out of the brawling current of the world where right and wrong clashed against each other with such force and speed that a man

could not untangle one from the other to see which was which? He was all tangled up, he thought wearily. Sometime, somehow, he would stay the wave, disentangle the name from the thing, the creed from the deed. But could he?—when he, too, felt himself sucked into the vortex that whirled him about without his willing it, had already furiously wrenched him apart from Marius, was maybe wrenching him away from all the old easeful life he had known into a hurly-burly where he could never again recover the pure clarity of his creed.

He turned down Harvey's street, thinking that if he could not go back, then he must go forward. He could not stand fiddling between thinking and acting, acting and thinking—once he had given himself, there could be no half-thoughts, no half-acts, no fever of thought with spasms of action. "Funny," he said to himself, "three months ago, two months ago, I thought I was old, I thought I was settled, never thought I'd be on the move again. Now I hardly know where I'm going, but I'm glad to be moving again, glad to be alive again—yes, if now I have to test my creed, and perhaps lose all that so far a lifetime of living and thinking have given me, I'll find my own legs again."

Already he found himself disposed to forgive Harvey, even if what Marius had told him had some truth in it. Marius had put his own name to it, but it would bear a sweeter name. And Harvey would have it, too, he knew suddenly. Harvey had had no choice either, he had had to commit himself to action, he decided, thinking back to the day after the Fourth when Harvey had first laid out for him his fear for the Bank and his plan for the power-plant.

He wondered suddenly what name would Josie give to their doings—his and Harvey's and Francis's. To her, so like her mother, life was a flat calm whose colors were always plain to see—white as white, and black as black. To tell her what Marius had said, and supposing it were true, to see her turn pale and sick, knowing her husband for a bribe-taker and her father for a suborner—what then?

He paced more slowly through the cool October night. His

thought took a different turn. What was all the fuss anyway?—Marius the dreamer, excited because something did not quite fit his dream of what was fitting. Let him complain as he had complained for years. What of it? Harvey's ideas would be as sensible as Marius's were dreamy, as practical as Marius's were impractical, as well-gearred to the rush of life as Marius's dream-machinery was not. Still even while he turned from Marius, he knew that something would be lost in this concession to common sense. Could he not, with a million others, in the name of common sense have stayed home in '61 and talked about preserving the Union, and never made a move to do it? Then his sleeve would not be empty now, and a good many dead would now be living. He ran his hand down his empty sleeve and reflected that the integrity of his body had gone into maintaining the integrity of his belief; and now perhaps the integrity of his heart—thinking of Marius Schaeffer and his lost friendship—must be sacrificed too. There were few who fought and came away unhurt. Well, he would hear what Harvey had to say, he thought at last, turning into Harvey's driveway. . . .

When John finished, Harvey laughed, and said: "Sit down and make yourself comfortable, John." There was nothing uneasy in his laughter. "Francis Connell was a lawyer, a good one, before he was a Councilman, and the Bank's used him in legal matters time and again. Sure, he's had money from us, good money, too. What of it? Does Schaeffer want him to give up his law-office because he's in politics? Why, he couldn't support himself, never mind a family on the salary he gets as a Councilman. We pay him a fat fee for his service to us because he earns it. And what he does to earn it is his own business, not Schaeffer's or anybody else's." He went on a little cautiously: "I suppose, John, that Connell may have done some things that an angel wouldn't do. . . . Maybe I have, for that matter. But what do such things amount to where the good of thousands is concerned?"

The old man shook his head. "I would not want us, though, to make a sacrifice of principle—of integrity," he said in a low voice.

"You needn't feel so," Harvey said quickly. "Not for a minute. But this plant we're building means too much to the Bank, to us, to the people of this city, for us to let one or two dreamers stand in the way of our success with it." He hesitated, then said: "I'll tell you something, John—we came mighty close to losing the scheme. You know why? Because the Gas Company—I don't mean the figureheads in town here—but the big bugs of the Trust didn't like the idea of our electricity putting out their gas. Their street-lighting contract expires in two years. Connell's promised me it won't be renewed. Suppose Connell and I had hesitated to use some influence?" he asked boldly. "The right pressure in the right places now has meant the difference to the people in this city between high gas rates and low electric rates. And your socialist friend, if he could stop us, would be working for the Gas Company, cutting the throats of the people he thinks he's helping. I tell you it's too complicated a matter, John, for every principle to hold true in. Some we've held by, and some we couldn't hold by, but the ones we've held by are the ones that are vital to us and the people of this city. And that's the truth." He had said more than he intended, and he waited anxiously for the old man's reply.

But John was thinking that he had got the answer he expected: to know the details of Harvey's business with Connell and Connell's business at the City Hall could not help now. Nor would such knowledge change his attitude toward their enterprise. In his mind's eye, he saw the great gaping hole of the excavation waiting to be filled, waiting to be filled with the plant that Harvey and he were bringing into being. The test of the principles would come when the plant was finished and moved into the stream of the city's life. They would have to wait, wait and see whether its great good would wash away the little evil that went with its creation. "But aren't you worried, Harvey," he asked, "that he's going to make trouble if he runs against Francis in November? I mean, by talk about us?"

Harvey smiled. "What can he do, John? He's got no organization behind him. All he can do is hire a hall somewhere. A few

people who've got nothing better to do will come out of curiosity maybe to hear him, most of them to laugh at him. He'll have to stand on the platform and eat his pride when they jeer at him. . . . You'd be doing him a favor, not us, if you could persuade him not to run."

"I guess I couldn't persuade him to anything now," John said. "We called each other a few names."

"That's a shame. You've been friends for so long."

"More than thirty years now," the old man said. "Began when I rented his father the first store they had. A little hole in the wall it was, on Hamblin Street."

"He'll get over it," Harvey said. "Though I don't know. . . . A single track mind like his, it's hard to say. It's too bad."

"It was beyond my control," John said in a low voice.

"I feel as if it were partly my fault," Harvey said. "After all, I—"

The old man shook his head quickly. "No, no, Harvey. No one's at fault. It just happened, that's all. Let's not talk of it any more."

Harvey stood up. They had been sitting in what Annabelle called his den, a small room fantastic with red drapes, hassocks, and fake Oriental ornaments. "This place gives me the creeps," he said. "Let's go down to the sitting-room and visit a while. Mother'll be glad to see you. . . ."

"Where's Phil?" John asked as they walked down the stairs.

"Gone to the picture show, I guess," Harvey said. "No—I remember now. He's out with some of his school friends starting some kind of club, he told me."

"And how's Will?" John asked.

"Asleep. At least, I hope so. Doctor's orders. We're kind of worried about him."

In the sitting-room, Eulalia Cantrell said: "About time you came to see us, John."

SCHOOL had started as usual the Monday after Labor Day, but Indie Whipple had not gone back. The Judge had given his father

and his mother six months apiece in the State Reformatories, and he said good-by to them in the detention-room at the police-station. His father had been sullen, but his mother had cried and squeezed him against her while he squirmed uneasily. He had felt no grief, he just felt alone. And that was how he wanted to feel. When he told Dave Bandler that his father and mother had been sent to jail, Mr. Bandler helped him get his working papers and gave him a job helping with the junk. In the old stable where Morris piled his junk and kept the horse, Indie cleaned out one of the box-stalls and set up in it the best bed he could find in the junk. Mrs. Bandler gave him some old blankets and towels. He washed up in the rusty sink at the back of the place. He hung up a couple of calendars in the stall, squeezed a broken-down chair into it, and felt free and happy.

There was plenty of work for him to do. The first few weeks Mr. Bandler had set him to straightening out the place. He heaped and baled rags and sorted the tangled litter of junk in the stable and in the yard. Sometimes he went out with Mr. Bandler on the wagon. The first time he went out, they had worked through the Flats, and at the corner of Dick and Tremayne Streets a gang of tough kids began to yell at them: "Hey, nigger! Hey, sheeny! Hey, lookit the sheeny wid his nigger kid!"

Indie had picked up a piece of pipe from the wagon, muttering: "I'll split their heads open," and would have leaped to the ground, but Morris had laid a hand on his arm and told him:

"No, Indie. . . . Don't look, don't hear. Dirt don't stick to a man that's clean inside."

A little later when the gang got tired of yelling and chasing them, Morris asked: "You don't mind sleeping in the stable?"

"Gee, no, Mr. Bandler," Indie had answered, "I don't mind."

Morris had nodded. "That's good, Indie. . . . You should live inside, not outside."

And Indie understood him because there was a place inside him where he lived, a place of trees and a white beach and a long wave running in, a place where he was alone and free. He was

almost afraid to bring himself to the thought of it. He liked it to rise shining in his mind when he least expected it. And it rose when Mr. Bandler spoke to him.

Another time, about the beginning of September, Morris, giving him his pay of six dollars for the week, had asked: "You saving a little money, Indie?"

"No, Mr. Bandler," Indie had said, "not yet."

"So try to save a little, Indie. Every week put a little by the bank. Money is a wall."

"A wall, Mr. Bandler?"

"Yes, Indie, a strong wall."

He did not say any more, but at the end of the month, Indie went down to the Farmers and Mechanics Bank with five dollars he had saved up, and got in return for his money a little gray book with his name, Frank Whipple, written into it, and a number stamped on it in red.

A couple of days later he met Joe Cascione on his way to school.

"I wish I was workin' too," Joe said. "I'm sicka school already."

"How's the other fellers?" Indie asked him. "I ain't seen none of them but Dave for a long time."

"Ah," Joe said disgustedly, "I don't see 'em much. Only thing is we're all in the same room. That little sucker, Louie Davis, is always with a girl, an' Al Schaeffer's workin' in his father's store after school, an' Amby Tait's been hangin' around his house all the time." He laughed. "We got a horseface for a home room teacher. She's teachin' us Latin. What the hell do I wanna learn Latin for?" He screwed his face up, and said in a high-pitched voice: "*Mensa*, a table: *mensae*, of a table: *mensae*, to, or for, a table. . . . You're better off workin' is all I gotta say."

"Won't your father let you quit and get a job?" Indie asked him.

"Nah," Joe said. "Because we ain't gonna live around here for much longer. I'm gonna live on a farm, be a hayseed. My ol' man's takin' all the money him and my brothers saved up and is gonna buy a farm."

Indie quickened his step. "Well, it was swell seein' you, Joe,"

he said. "I gotta beat it now. I gotta get to work."

"Well, listen, Indie," Joe said, "you wanna go up to the corner tonight? They been talkin' in school about startin' some kinda club. C'mon up with me."

"I don't know," Indie said.

"Sure, c'mon on. The ol' gang'll be together again. Jes's, you can't stick by yourself all the time. You'll get dippy. C'mon!"

"Well, all right," Indie said. "I guess so. But I can't stay up there late because I have to get up early. I got a paper route, too, y'know."

"Jes's, Indie, you must be rollin' in money. What you doin'—savin' up to get married?"

Indie smiled. "No, to buy an island," he said boldly.

"Buy an island? Now I know you're dippy!" Joe said.

About half-past seven that night, Joe called for him, and they walked up towards the corner of Edgar Street and Hurst Avenue where the gang used to get together nights.

As they came in sight of the corner, Joe said: "Yup, there they are. See 'em under the light? . . . Ah, they got some girls with 'em," he went on in disgust. "An' that siss, Phil Cantrell too. Thinks because his ol' man owns a bank that he's pretty classy goods. I'd like to give him a good punch in the snoot."

When they got up to the gang, Louie Davis said to Indie: "Gee, Indie, it's a long time since you been around." He turned to Irene Curtis who was leaning against the fence talking to another girl. "Irene, I wanna introduce my friend, Indie Whipple."

"Pleased t'meet you," Indie mumbled.

"How d'you do?" Irene said, and turned back to talk to Bessie Crandall and Ethel Durkin again.

"How's school?" Indie said after a minute.

"It's classy," Louie said. "It's kind of different from grammar school. There's a lotta kids from grammar in my home room. Some of them'll be here soon."

"Who?" Indie asked. He saw that the girls had drawn a little apart, and that they were whispering together. "Who else?"

"Well, Amby Tait an' maybe Dave Bandler an' Milly Charles. . . . Say," he said excitedly, "you remember that kid we nearly had a fight with last Fourtha July? Well, he's in my room too, an' he might come." He looked shyly at Indie. "What you been doin' anyway, Indie? You ain't been around much. Remember we went berryin' the day after the Fourth an' the cows chased us? Remember? Some fun."

"Yeah," Indie said. "Some fun. . . . Listen, Louie, I gotta see Joe about somethin', I'll be back in a minute."

"Oh, that's okay," Louie said. He was already turning towards the girls.

Indie went up to Joe Cascione who had been talking to Al Schaeffer. "Hi, Al," he said. He touched Joe's arm. "Listen, Joe, let's walk down town."

"Jes's, Indie, we just got here!"

"I know," Indie said, "but I just remembered I got an important errand. It's for Mr. Bandler."

"Stick around for a while," Al said. "We're gonna have some fun, Indie."

Indie turned to him. "You're not kiddin'?"

Al said: "What'd I be kiddin' for?" He began to tell them about a fight he had had in the locker room at school.

Then the others came up, Phil Cantrell, wearing long pants, and Milly Charles who giggled excitedly as she approached them.

"Pleased t'meet you," Indie mumbled when Al introduced him.

Milly peered at him in the yellow light of the street lamp, and then went to the other girls who were leaning against the fence. She said: "Why, he's—" and Irene Curtis whispered sharply: "Sh!"

Then Joe Cascione said: "C'mon, now, let's get started doin' somethin'."

"What do you wanna do?" Louie Davis asked.

"I've got an idea," Phil Cantrell said. "Let's all go down to the Turk's, and I'll treat the crowd to ice cream."

"Nah," Joe said, "let's have a game of kick-the-stick or butter-

cheese-'n'-eggs. We'll choose up sides."

He stared at Phil who eased the collar on his long neck and asked: "What'll the girls do?"

"Who cares?" Joe said. "They c'n go home if they wanna. Who ast them anyway?"

"Why, it was all arranged at school today, wasn't it, Amby?" Phil said.

Amby turned to Joe. "Sure, Joe, it's all fixed up. We're gonna have a club, a wheel club, and go on picnics and expeditions."

"The girls, too?"

"Sure," Louie said. "Irene's gotta wheel, and the other girls have, too."

"Well, I ain't got any wheel," Joe said. "Neither's Indie. . . . But wait, I got an idea. I bet Indie c'n find a coupla frames down at the Jew's junk place, hey, Indie?"

"I don't know, Joe, as I can," Indie said slowly.

"Well, it's s'posed to be a school club anyway," Irene said suddenly.

"Whaddya mean?—this is all our ol' gang here. What's school got to do with it?"

Al Schaeffer said: "Well, y'see, Joe, it was Mr. Tanner's idea—you know, the botany teacher. He's gonna take us out on expeditions."

"That horseface!" Joe said.

"You don't have to call him names—he's very popular," Ethel Durkin said. "Last year's class elected him 'Most Popular Teacher'."

"Well, what's the sense of arguing?" Phil said. "I move we all adjourn down to the ice cream parlor and elect officers. We got a lot to decide tonight—who'll be president, and the dues and stuff like that."

"That's a good idea," Irene Curtis said emphatically. "Let's go."

"Yes," Ethel Durkin said. "Besides my mother'd be good and mad if she knew I was out on a street corner like this."

"Ah, go tell your ol' lady to jump in the lake," Joe said.

There was a little silence.

Then Ethel said: "You shut your big mouth."

"Take it easy, Joe," Amby said.

"That's no way for a gentleman to talk," Phil Cantrell said. "Is it, fellers?"

The girls all murmured about him.

Joe wheeled towards him. "Who the hell d'you think you are? Just because your old man's got a bank, you don't have to think you're our boss. Put that in your pipe an' smoke it."

"Gee, Joe," Al said, "that's got nothin' to do with it. What're you makin' such a fuss for? . . . If you c'n get a wheel, you c'n be in the club, too."

"Some chance!" Joe said. He turned to Al and Amby. "What're you lettin' him break up the gang for? Jes's, we all stuck together right through grammar-school, and now you're lettin' him bust it all up." His voice was high and strained.

Indie, listening all the time, felt their furtive glances on him. He had realized from the beginning that the uneasiness of the bunch was not on Joe's account, but his. He had wanted to go, but he could not, fascinated by the group of pale faces moving back and forth like fruit swaying on a black bough into the bright circle of the gas lamp. Behind him the girls whispered and fluttered uneasily.

"You're just a sorehead," Phil said to Joe.

"You're a swell bunch!" Joe said to the others. "What are you hangin' around with this pimple-face sissy for anyway? You think maybe his old man'll give you a bag of money?" He hurried on: "Listen, let's go up to the park the way we used to, huh?" His words were light and quick, and he peered eagerly at Al Schaeffer and Amby Tait. "You, too, Louie," he said after a moment, in the little pause that followed his words.

"You're certainly nervy," Ethel Durkin said, "trying to break up our party."

"Ah, shut up," Joe said. "Who cares what you think?"

Al said: "Don't get so tough, Joe."

Amby grabbed his wrist and gave it a yank. "Ah, come on, Joe, don't be such a sorehead. Come on down to the Turk's place. . . . Remember him in the parade Fourth July? He was a beaut."

"Besides," Louie said, "we can't leave the girls, Joe."

"You're always suckin' around the girls anyway," Joe said harshly.

Milly Charles giggled. "Well, if you want to know, we won't go anyway—we're going home."

"That's fine," Joe said. "Who's stoppin' you?"

"Gee, why, Irene?" Louie Davis said.

"Because of that nigger, that's why," Ethel Durkin said loudly. "We're not going with any nigger. Let him find some other niggers to play with."

Indie heard the words without surprise and without anger. It was as if they had formed themselves out of the air instead of being spoken by a voice, and they seemed to hang in the air a long time. But his blood pounded up into his head, and after a moment he said: "So long," and turned away. Behind him he heard the silence regather itself. When he got around the corner, he broke into a run and ran as fast as he could all the way down to the stable. He went into the stall, lighted the old kerosene lamp, and lay down on his back and looked up at the shadowy rafters overhead. Now I know, he thought. But I don't care, I don't need them. I don't need anybody. I'll be alone. He lay quietly, waiting. . . . He knew that after a time his island beach would rise and glow inside him. I'm glad it happened, he told himself. Now I'm sure. I don't want anybody, I don't need anybody. And he felt that at last he had put them out of his life, not that they had put him out of theirs. Now he was alone and happy.

He heard somewhat later a pounding on the door of the stable. He lay still, but the pounding continued, and after a moment he threw his legs off the bed and went out to the door and called: "Who is it?"

"It's me—Joe. Lemme in, I wanna talk to you."

Indie undid the padlock and said: "Whaddya want, Joe?"

Joe came in and sat down on the edge of the bed.

Indie stared at him. "You had a fight!"

"Y'bet I had a fight," Joe said. His face was pale and smeared with blood, and one eye was bruised. "I gave it to that Cantrell all right, all right. I beat the Jesus outa him."

"You'll get in trouble," Indie said. "He wears glasses. . . ."

"What do I care?" Joe said. "He had it comin' to him, the dirty rotten bastard, bustin' up our gang." He burst out: "The hell with the gang! I'm never gonna go with that bunch again. Al and Amby and Louie—they c'n all go to hell."

Indie turned up the wick of the lamp. "What started it?"

Joe snarled at him. "Whadda y'mean what started it? They chased you away, didn't they?"

"They didn't chase me away," Indie said slowly.

"Oh, no," Joe said, "I s'pose they gave you a big bookay, huh?"

Indie looked at him in the dim light. "If they don't want me," he said, "it's all right. I don't want them either. I c'n get along without 'em."

Joe said suddenly: "You think they don't want you because you're a nigger, huh? Well, they don't want me either. An' you know why?" He waited, but Indie had pulled a little away from him, and Joe blustered: "It's because we ain't got money to buy fancy wheels, that's why! If our folks had as much kale as theirs got, they'd beg on their knees to have us in their stinkin' club. Sure, they would!"

"You know it's not the money," Indie said in a low voice. "You heard what that girl said. But I don't care."

After a moment Joe got up and came over to him. He said in a different voice, a voice Indie had never heard him use before: "Listen, Indie, I don't care what it is, see? I'm stickin' with you. Al an' Amby an' Louie c'n suck around Cantrell and them girls, but I'm stickin' with you. That's all I gotta say."

Indie was silent. He was wishing that Joe would go away. Now

that he had to be alone, he was glad. It was all settled.

"Whaddya say, Indie?—we'll stick together, huh? Jus' the two of us," Joe insisted.

"Yes, Joe," Indie said stiffly.

"Jes's, Indie, is that all you got to say?"

"I don't know, Joe," Indie told him. "I don't know what to say." The light made deep yellow shadows on his dusky face, and his lips looked purple.

Joe watched him hungrily.

"Thanks, Joe," he said at last. "I guess we'll have to stick together now. Just you and me." He could not say any more.

But it was enough for Joe. "That's swell, Indie. Just swell. You an' me, we'll show those rich stuck-up bastards."

"Sure, Joe," Indie said. He was anxious for Joe to go. He did not want him, he did not need a friend. He did not want or need anybody. He wanted himself alone and free.

After Joe had gone, and he was lying on the cot, staring up at the rafters, he waited for the island-vision to come. He waited a long time, but he did not see it. "Not alone enough," he murmured to himself just before he fell asleep. "Maybe I'll dream it. . . ."

"WHATSA MATTER—you have a fight?" Paul Sakarian asked, staring at the long scratch on Phil's cheek. He wiped his hands on his apron, and beamed at the boys and girls sitting at the counter.

Amby Tait looked up from his ice cream, and grinned. "Yeah. But at least we didn't get arrested."

"Sure, we know all about you, Sakarian," Al Schaeffer said, taking his cue from Amby. "We know how you nearly got arrested for fightin' on the Fourtha July."

"No, no! I'm no fight!" Paul exclaimed. "You make mistake, boys."

Amby winked at the others. "Ah, cut it out. . . . It was in the paper, wasn't it?"

"Sure, sure, but you don't read right," Paul said. "A robber hit

me on head—look!” He lifted back a lock of his thick dark hair, and they all stared at the crescent scar on his forehead just under the hairline. “See? . . . He hit me on head with gun, an’ take all my money.”

“Whaddya mean all your money? I bet it was about seventeen cents,” Louie Davis said.

The girls, busily spooning up their cream, giggled.

Paul said: “Plenty money, maybe a hundred dollars.”

“A hundred?” Phil Cantrell said, anxious for his share of the girls’ laughter, “why, you must’ve dreamed the whole thing.”

“Sure,” Al said, “I bet you got that scar when you were dropped on your head when you were a baby.”

The girls sputtered, and Louie said: “Or you got kicked by a mule in the Fourth July parade. . . . Say you certainly looked classy, Sakarian, ol’ kid. I bet if you were wearin’ your baby-blue uniform that night, the robber wouldn’t’ve dared to hold you up.”

“Sure,” Amby said, “that fancy Turk uniform woulda scared him to death.”

“You mean he’d a died laughin’, that’s what you mean,” Al said.

Paul said good-humoredly: “All right, boys, make jokes all you want. . . . I want everybody comin’ here feel nize, feel happy. Happy like me.”

“Yeah, what you so happy about?” Amby asked. He held out his plate. “Fill ’er up—make it strumberry this time.”

“Hokay,” Paul said, smiling. He filled the plate, and as he set it down again, said: “I’m happy because I get married pretty soon.”

“Married?” said Al. “Say, who’d marry you? Some cock-eyed ol’ lady, I bet.”

Paul still grinned, and Amby said: “Yeah, an’ I bet she’s got a wooden leg, too.”

“Laugh, make jokes all you want, my boys ’n’ girls,” Paul said jubilantly. “Girl I marry’s beautiful girl—big blue eyes, nice long yellow hair. Peacherino, hey?”

“Say,” Phil said, “a girl like that wouldn’t be marrying a Turk. You must be dreaming.”

"No, no," said Paul. He frowned. "Don' call me Turk. I'm Armenian. Armenian, not Turk." His face brightened again. "I'm marry American girl, get citizen papers pretty soon, have lotsa money in bank, make American home. Then I'm real American." He wiped his towel over the sticky counter and repeated: "Real American. I'm saving up long time now to get married to American girl. I got lots money in bank."

"Gee, I'll bet he's got it in your father's bank, Phil," Al Schaeffer said. "Whaddya say we go down and open the bank with your key and take his money out?"

"Sure, that's a good idea," Phil said.

Paul leaned forward, "Your father own bank? You rich boy?"

"Depends on what bank you mean," Phil said. "But my father—my father and grandfather—own the Farmers and Mechanics, all right."

"Sure, sure! Is my bank, too. Shake hands." He leaned over the counter towards Phil, who clasped the large moist hand. "'S fine," Paul said.

"We're goin' down just the same and take your money out," Louie said.

Paul grinned. "Make jokes, be happy," he said. "Two, three days, I make jokes, I'm happy. I'm married next week."

"Congratulations!" Ethel Durkin said in her light sharp voice.

Paul beamed. "T'anks. . . . You come buy ice cream alla time when I'm married, huh?"

"Oh, certainly!" Milly Charles said. "Every morning and every night we'll be down for a gallon." She giggled, and the others laughed.

"Well," said Al, "now that that's all settled and we got him married, how about the meeting? It's getting kinda late. Let's get started before anybody comes in."

"Okay," Amby said, "let's get started. . . . I nominate Al Schaeffer for president."

"Not so fast," Al said, "I was gonna nominate you."

"Well, you're too late now," Amby said.

"Seems to me if Phil started the whole idea, he oughta be the president," Bessie Crandall said.

They squabbled for a time, but finally elected Al, president, and Phil, treasurer, and Amby, secretary.

The girls complained that they had not been given an office, and Louie Davis was just saying: "Well, how about me? I'm not anything, but I'm not kickin'," when the door behind them opened noisily and crashed to.

They spun about on their stools, and Lily Marlow, pale and panting a little, came quickly across the floor.

"Lily, whatsa matter?" Paul came hurriedly out from behind the soda counter.

"Oh, Paul," she said, "gee, I'm glad I got here. . . . He was followin' me again." She was really frightened. She had not seen Jack Smith since the day of the trial, when she had gone down to the Superior Court, her heart full of a burning nausea, to testify against him. She would never forget how his lawyer with his smooth soft voice had got her all mixed up on the stand: "You say you recognized him, Miss Marlow? Did you see his face? . . . No, how could I, it was all covered up, except his eyes. . . . Ah, then you recognized him by his eyes? . . . Well, I guess so. . . . You're not sure? . . . They looked like his eyes. . . . Oh, you could tell by the color in the darkness? . . . No, how could I? . . . Then you're not certain, is that it, Miss Marlow? When she did not answer, he had asked her again, and at last she had exclaimed: I swear it was him, though! . . . His voice maybe?—you could recognize him by his voice, you've said. How? . . . Well, he had it disguised lower than his usual voice. . . . Did he tell you that? . . . No, of course not. . . . Then how'd you know it wasn't someone else's voice? . . . Well, I don't know the voice of everyone in town. . . . Exactly, Miss Marlowe. You don't. Then your accusation of Mr. Smith rests merely on your feeling that it was he who held you and Mr. Sakarian up? . . . Yes, I just felt it was him. . . ."

But Jack had not got away with it, she gloated. They had ar-

rested him again right after the case was dismissed, and the judge had sentenced him later to sixty days for gambling. She was glad, she wished it had been for sixty years, the dirty rotten lying crook, making a fool of a girl, and robbing her besides. She had hardly thought about him till a couple of weeks ago when she saw him hanging around in front of Schaeffer's at closing time. She had sneaked out the back way, and gone through the alley and jumped on a street car down at the next stop.

The next day he had come up to her on the street, he looked terrible, his face was pale, and his clothes looked old and dirty, and said pleadingly: "Lily!" but she had said to him in a shaking voice: "You let me alone, or I'll scream for a cop!"

He had let her pass, but as she went by him, he said: "Lily, why you treatin' me like this?"

The dirty hypocrite, the dirty liar! making believe like his smart lawyer that it really was not him in the park when she hoped to drop dead if it was not. She had not seen him again until tonight. He began to follow her when she came out of her boardinghouse to meet Paul and have him walk her home after he closed the place up. She had passed a policeman, but she had not said anything because she suddenly felt sorry for Jack, he looked so pale and so thin. She wanted him to go away, she never wanted to see him again, she had told herself, hurrying along faster and faster as if she were running away from herself and not from him.

"Where is he?" Paul asked. "Lily, is he outside?"

"I dunno," Lily said. "Last time I looked back was the corner, and I saw him under the lamp. So I began to run."

"Gee, look, Louie," Irene whispered, "she's shakin' all over."

"I wonder what's the matter," Louie said nervously to her.

"Sh!" she told him.

Lily was whispering to Paul at the end of the counter, and after a moment he nodded and said to the staring kids: "I close up now. So you go home, huh? Come anodder night, boys and girls."

Phil got up. "Sure. We know when we're not wanted, all right, all right. How much do I owe you?" With an ample gesture he put his hand in his pocket and drew out a bill. "There's a five," he said. "Take it all out of that."

Paul took the bill and gave him his change. The others were all rising, the girls patting their hair and taking a last look into the mirror in which they had been watching themselves lovingly.

Then the door opened, and a man came in. He said: "Lily, f'God's sake, I hafta talk to you. Give's a chance—you can't be so mean to me, Lily."

"There he is! I told you!" Lily turned towards Jack while the boys and girls backed away. "I never wanna see you again as long as I live, you dirty crook," she said. "Go make a sucker outa some other poor girl."

"Mister, go away, or I call policeman!" Paul said.

Jack ignored him. His eyes were fixed on Lily. His lips trembled a little. He said: "Jes's, Lily, you can't call me a crook. Didn't they prove it to you in court I wasn't the one? Honest to God, Lily, I wasn't the one."

"Ah, cut it out, you dirty stinkin' liar," Lily said. "You was the only one that knew of that place in the park besides me."

"How do y'know I was, Lily? How do y'know somebody else didn't know it, maybe somebody, the feller that held you up, maybe he saw you there."

"I don't believe it," she said weakly. "I don't believe it. An' I never wanna see you again. I'm gonna marry Paul here. See? Instead of waitin' for a crookin' bum like you."

"Lily," he said, "may I drop down dead in front of you if I held you up. An' I wanna wish you and him all the happiness in the world when you're married. . . . But all I'm askin' for now is a fiver. Just to gimme a start outa town. I'm goin' West an' you'll never see me again."

"Mister, go away. Go out," Paul said.

Smitty wiped his hand across his mouth. His coat collar was

turned up, and when he spoke his Adam's apple slid up and down. He was wearing neither shirt nor tie. "Jes's, Lily," he said, "I ain't got a nickel to my name. Last night I had t'sleep in the park. I can't get a job in this dump of a burg, and I'm gettin' desprit. I'm hungry, too."

"What do I care about you?" Lily said shrilly. "You're nothin' to me any more. An' if my intended tells you to get outa here, you better go. . . . Besides, you're scarin' these kids." She had taken her hat off, and the light of the gas mantle glittered in the coils of her yellow hair.

Smitty advanced a few steps towards her. "Lily,"—his voice broke—"I'm beggin' you. Didn't I always treat you right when I had the kale? Didn't I? All I'm askin' is a loan. I'll mail it back to you as soon as I get on my feet again. I got a brother in Frisco's got plenty of money, I got a friend in Denver'll gimme a good job, just gimme a fiver so's I c'n get started." He sobbed suddenly, and again drew his hand across his mouth.

In the silence that followed Louie Davis gulped loudly.

Lily was murmuring to Paul, but he kept shaking his head.

"God knows I loved you, Lily, with a true heart," Jack began again. "For old time's sake, Lily, I'm askin' it. Just gimme a chance to make a new start in life, that's all I'm askin'. It ain't much to ask." His eyes brimmed with tears, and he walked slowly farther into the store. "No matter what happens, I'll always love you, Lily. How c'n you begrudge me five dollars?" He turned abruptly to the staring boys and girls. "Never let your heart harden like hers," he said. "Always be kind to one another." He took his hat off and approached them. "You look like good young ladies 'n' gen'lemen," he said. "I was put in prison only f' playin' cards. Y'wouldn't believe it, would you? In a free country . . . jus' f' playin' cards." Dramatically he pointed at Lily. "There stands the girl I loved, an' she won't have nothin' to do with me now because I got a prison record. Now she's gonna marry another. God bless 'em I say, but I'm down an' out an' discouraged. I may starve to death for all of her. But you"—he held out his hands to their fixed gaze—

"show her how to be kind. Gimme whatever you want to, I don't care how much. Help a fellow hum'n bein'!"

Phil Cantrell said in a loud shaky voice: "You deserve another chance in the world: I have faith in you!" He held out his hand. "There!—there's four dollars. It's all I have except for some change, but you are welcome to it, you poor derelict."

"You're a crazy boy!" Paul said.

The others were spellbound. They saw the dirty fingers lightly take the money from Phil's outstretched hand. "God bless you, my boy," Jack said. He turned, and hurried out of the door.

Milly Charles said ecstatically while Lily ran into the back room: "Gee, it's better than a play!"

"It's a true drama of life, that's what it is," Phil whispered to her.

Paul came up to them. "Sorry," he said, "sorry. This man is no good, is a crook. Why you give him money, you foolish boy?"

"That's my business," Phil said.

With Paul shepherding them, the crowd moved to the door, talking excitedly.

"Gee," Amby said while they were walking uptown, "it's too bad Dave Bandler wasn't here. He missed it."

"It was just like a book," Milly Charles said, turning towards him. "I felt so sorry for that poor man. He's better looking than that Turk too."

"G'wan," Amby said, "he's a bum. He's no good. I wouldn't of given him a nickel even."

"Well!" said Milly. "I'm not used to being contradicted right to my face!"

"You know it all, don't you?" Phil said.

"Ah, button up your lip," Amby said. "Didn't Joe give you enough tonight? . . . Here's my corner. G'night." He swaggered off.

It was nearly half-past nine when he got home. Going up the walk, he saw that the lights were out in the McCaffreys' upstairs, but that the parlor windows in his house glowed yellow. "Com-

pany," he said to himself, and hurried up the back steps. Inside, he stopped in the kitchen for a drink of water, his head cocked back to hear the voices from the front of the house. Then he went a little timidly into the parlor, and saw that his father and his mother and his Uncle Joe were going at it hot and heavy. He could see that his mother was good and sore about something.

"This is a fine time for a young boy to be comin' in," she snapped at him.

He started to tell them then what had happened at the Turk's, but his father interrupted him. "Never mind that now, Amby. This time our news is more excitin' than yours."

"You bet," his Uncle Joe said.

"Amby," his father went on, grinning self-consciously, "you are now lookin' at the contractin' firm of Tait and Tait, with your mother there a none too silent partner."

"And I'm against it. Still against it," Margaret Tait said. "You're gamblin' the safety of our old age, Mike."

"Come, now, Peg, that's not the way to be feelin'," Joe Tait protested. He leaned forward, stretching his red wrinkled neck towards her. "You make me feel like a villain."

His father looked at Amby, and Amby said quickly: "Well, I think it's a peachy idea, that's all I gotta say."

"You don't know what you're talkin' about, Ambrose," his mother said. "And no one's asked you to put your two cents' worth in." She turned towards the two men. "And why wasn't I told about this sooner? Were you fearful maybe that I might keep you from pourin' your money away?"

"But, Peg," her brother-in-law said while Mike looked glumly at his wife, "it'll come back to us. At a fat profit, too. What good's your money doin' sittin' in the bank? It's makin' money for the bankers, and a measly four per cent for you."

"It's enough for me," Margaret told him sharply. "It's safe, that's what I care about."

Her husband laughed. "You! You biddy! If you dared, you'd be down at the railroad tracks with a shawl over your head like

them down at the Flats, pickin' up hunks of coal that've been swept off the tenders. . . . Say, if you started early in the mornin' tomorrow, you could pick up a fat bagful by sundown."

She flared up at him. "Fifteen years ago when you were diggin' in the streets with a pick and shovel, didn't I go out many a mornin' after you'd gone, and do just that?"

"You didn't!"

"That's all you know about it, you paper millionaire!" she said.

"Well, anyway, it's too late now to stop," Mike said. "My notice is in down at the yards. Tomorra's my last day. Then I go right out to the job."

"What job, Pa?" Amby asked.

"Out at the Cantrell construction on the river, that's where. We got a good piece of buildin' work to do out there, and your Uncle Joe's been unloadin' the stuff the past week for us, and hirin' help and what not. So tomorra we begin."

"That's wonderful, Pa," Amby said. "You gonna gimme a job, too, for after school?"

"Maybe," Mike said.

"Never mind that now, Ambrose," his mother said. "You stick to your books. You're meant to do somethin' better than swing a pick."

"Holy Saint Joseph!" Mike exclaimed. "Listen to her!—you'd think we was day laborers instead of business men."

"And if you're not careful," she said, "maybe you'll be swingin' a pick again."

"'Careful, careful!' " he mimicked her. "Is that the only word of good luck you have for us?"

Her face softened at once. "Oh, Mike, it's not that I wouldn't have you make a success of the business. . . . It's that I'm worried for you, for all of us."

"Now Peg," Joe Tait told her, "don't you be worryin'. My Kate's made her mind up to the thing, she sees the good of it, and you might, too, if you was to have a talk with her."

Her husband leaned over. "I tell you what, Marg'ret. You get

to makin' a new altar cloth for the church. That'll ease your mind of the worryin'."

"Don't you make a mock of me for what I do for the church," she told him. "A bit of prayer for your new business wouldn't do you no harm either."

He said gravely: "And d'ye think I haven't? D'ye think I'm goin' into this like a lighthearted boy with his belly full of bread an' cheese? No, Marg'ret darlin', you ask Father Regan how many early masses I been to this past few weeks." His long face was solemn, and he looked uneasy.

"An' don't forget," Joe Tait said, "Francis Connell'll be takin' care of us. . . . He's got the Cantrells in his pocket now, what with his marryin' Mr. John Cantrell's girl next week."

"It's a Catholic marriage then?" she asked. "Some of the ladies down at the Guild were wonderin'."

"I had it from Francis himself," Joe Tait told her, nodding his head.

"Information's all that boy'll ever give away," Mike said.

"That's a true word," his brother told him, "what with his askin' me so mealmouthed t'day to drop in at his office soon. 'A few little details,' he says, meanin' a few little greenbacks. Oh, I caught his meanin' right enough. 'Is it for legal services to our firm?' I asks him. 'Right!' he says. 'I don't mean to be hurryin' ye,' he says, 'but when a man's marryin', he's in need right away.' 'I'll be there,' I said. . . . It's a nice little graft he has what with collectin' from the Cantrells on the one side and from us on the other."

"I don't see why you say that," Margaret said. "If the man's done you a service, he deserves his pay for it."

"That's one way of lookin' at it," Joe Tait said. He rose to his feet. "I'm glad you're taking this business easier now," he said. "O' course, it was sprung on ye, suddenlike."

"Never mind that now," she told him. Her small face with its pinched look relaxed, and she smiled uncertainly at her husband. "It's in the hands of God now. . . . And may He bless your undertakin'."

"Amen to that," Joe said.

"Amen and amen for Amby and me," Mike Tait grinned.

"I'll be writing the news to Annie tonight," Margaret told them, "and she'll be sendin' up her holy prayers too."

"Good-night, good-night," they all said, taking Joe to the front door.

DAVE BANDLER wondered what the gang was doing. He was sitting at the dining-room table, his chair tipped back, clasping his knees between his hands and watching his father's hand move slowly on his beard while he considered his next move on the chess-board. Morris's game was so involved that Dave had long ago given up any attempt to puzzle out his manoeuvres. His father worked out combinations that took twelve or thirteen moves to complete, while Dave, moving blithely forward with his three- and four-move combinations that would gain him a pawn or a bishop, would sometimes take the piece only to hear his father say: "Check, Davey!"

"Check? Where, Pa? I don't see any check."

"Right here," his father would say, repeating his move. "Look, I uncover the horse from my queen, so it's check. See?"

Sometimes Morris defeated himself. His game, so complex and delicate was its pattern, would break down, and then Dave's blunt simple play would sweep his father's pieces from the board while Morris looked on glumly at the rout and made futile attempts to stay it. Rarely, however, even after such a rout, could Dave beat him. His father loved the finicky end-play almost as much as the middle-game of intricate combination, and saved himself time and again from Dave's triumphant cry of "Checkmate!" by getting a perpetual check on Dave, or by luring him into a stalemate.

This kind of half-victory which Morris regarded as much a victory for himself as for Dave exasperated his son. "What're you so glad about, Pa, anyway? You didn't beat. It's a stalemate, a tie."

His father would say: "Look, there's no other game like this one, Davey, where a man can lose and yet not lose, where a man

can see nearly all his pieces go, his rooks, his horses, his bishops, and yet not lose. So, it's why I'm glad. When you make a stalemate on me, Davey, don't it make you feel good, too? Look, you're nothing, you're lost, so all of a sudden, you find one little place, one square where I can't catch you, even with all the pieces. There you're saved!"

"Nah," Dave told him, "I don't like that part of chess. It oughta be win or lose, lose or win—I don't like this halfway business, where you win sometimes even if you lose, or lose even when you got everything all won."

"Some day you'll grow up, Davey, so you'll see that this is the best game because life is like this, too—where it's also sometimes win-lose, lose-win, where sometimes a man loses when he thinks he wins, and wins when the other man thinks he loses. Yes, yes," he said, fingering his beard, "you'll see sometimes, Davey," and he would give his son a quick little cuff on the head and say: "Davey, you're a *schlemil*!"

Now Dave sat waiting, watching his father furtively, seeing a quick certain win for himself, provided his father was still engrossed in the seemingly aimless succession of moves that he had started some eight moves back with the surprising sacrifice of his queen to Dave's white bishop. From the kitchen he could hear the muffled whirr of his mother's sewing-machine, and from the flat above the loud voices of the Brombergs in their endless argument. "Gee, Pa, when you gonna make a move?" he said at last.

"Plen'y time, Davey. So what's your hurry? You got to catch maybe a train?"

"Gee, Pa, you been sitting on that move for ten minutes now. Besides I wanna go out an' meet the fellers. I promised 'em. We're havin' an important meeting."

"So wait a little, Davey. . . . Be a little patient, I'll soon be ready."

Dave sighed, and settled back in his chair, and after a while got so caught up in the game, seeing victory always so close, that

he forgot about the meeting. He won the game finally, and then had to give his father his revenge.

They were deep in the second game when Mrs. Bandler came in and said: "So stop playing already. It's late."

"Make a little tea, Hannah, like a good girl," Morris said. "When the tea's ready, we'll stop playing."

"Never mind tea now," his wife said. "When Sadie comes in, we'll have tea together."

Morris looked at his watch. "It's after ten," he said, "she should be home a'ready. Where'd she go?"

"By the picture show with Isadore Marcossou," Hannah said.

"Marcossou from the furniture Marcossou's?"

"Surely!" Hannah said. "'Smatta, Sadie ain't good enough for him?"

"Who said?"

Dave interrupted. "Aw, c'mon Pa, move, willya?"

"So what's your hurry?" Morris said to his wife. "She's not eighteen yet, so you want her to be married."

"Eighteen!" his wife exclaimed. "In two mont's she'll be nineteen. How long should she wait? Isadore Marcossou's a good boy, he's got a future in the business."

"You better cut it out, Ma," Dave said. "You got 'em married before he even popped the question yet."

"So never mind. Davey's right. Make tea now, Hannah. Sadie can make a glass for herself when she gets home," Morris said.

While they were having their tea and munching poppyseed cookies, they heard Sadie's voice on the stairs.

"She's got Isadore with her," Dave said.

"So late he's coming up?" his mother asked. She got up and went out to the parlor door that opened on the front stairs and lighted the gas jet on the landing. "Sadie?" she called down.

"Comin' right up, Ma," Sadie said. "I'm bringin' a visitor." Her flushed face, with shining eyes, appeared above the landing, and her mother said: "Sadie! what's the matter?"

Behind Sadie appeared Isadore Marcossou, his brown eyes

twinkling, and a wide grin on his thin brown face. "Nothin's the matter, Mrs. Bandler," he said. "Can't a girl get engaged to a feller without her folks getting all upset?"

"Isadore!" Sadie cried, "I thought you were gonna let me tell 'em!"

"What's the diff, Sade, who spills it first?" he said. "We're engaged, that's what counts."

"Engaged!" Hannah Bandler exclaimed. "Engaged!" She swept Sadie into her arms and kissed her. "My little girl should be engaged to be married!" She kissed Isadore, and then began to cry.

Mr. Bandler and Dave came out into the parlor. "Say, what's the excitement? What's the matter?" Dave asked.

"Meet your new son, Mr. Bandler," Isadore Marcosson said.

"New son?"

"Sure," said Isadore cockily, "Sadie and me got engaged tonight, gettin' married tomorra, off to Niagara Falls tomorra night."

"Tomorra!" Mrs. Bandler exclaimed.

"Oh, Ma, isn't he a scream? He's always jokin'," Sadie said.

"A nice joke, b'lieve me," her mother said.

Mr. Bandler was shaking Isadore's hand quietly, and then it was Dave's turn.

"Now you got some one else in the family to boss you around, hey, Dave?" Sadie said.

"It's all right with me if you're satisfied with this skinny pickle," Dave said, grinning.

"Say, you're pretty snappy with the answers yourself, Davey boy," said Isadore. "Well, what're we all standing aroun' for? Did y'show 'em the ring, Sade?"

"Imagine!" Mrs. Bandler said. "She's so excited she don't even show us the ring."

"It was so romantic. . . . He bought the ring last week and was carryin' it all this time." Sadie was holding her hand out proudly, and they exclaimed at the solitaire. "It's a Tiffany setting!" she said.

"I can see, b'lieve me, it's some beautiful ring," her mother told her.

"Nothin's too good for my Sade." Isadore beamed upon them all. "So how about a hot glass of tea?" he asked.

"Wait, I'll make fresh tea," Mrs. Bandler said. She went out, almost running, her cheeks flushed with excitement. The others went into the dining-room and sat down.

"Y'see," Sadie said, after they had all seated themselves and the tea was sending up its vapor, "we'll hafta get married next month because Isadore's going away."

"So soon?" Morris exclaimed.

"Well, Mr. Bandler, it's like this," Isadore told him. "Next month we're openin' a new store in Quessota."

"Isadore's gonna be the manager," Sadie said proudly.

"So," Isadore went on, "what's the use of my goin' there alone an' travelin' a hundred 'n' fifty miles every time I wanna see Sade? We figured out the best thing is to get married and make a home right off."

"It seems the best way," Sadie said. "What do you think, Pa?"

Morris Bandler put down his glass. "Whaddo I think, what should I think?— I think it's the best way too. Get married now before Isadore has to go, so there won't be any fuss later with catching trains. Sure, get married now."

"B'lieve me," Isadore said, laughing, "We're gonna have some big wedding. . . . Say, I got a family so big, you'll have to hire Masonic Hall for us to get married in!"

Sadie giggled at him, and Dave and Mrs. Bandler laughed.

"Sure, a big wedding," Hannah said. "My only girl's getting married, so it's the only wedding I'll ever make. We'll have some celebration, b'lieve me. Hah, Morris?"

"Sure, a big wedding," her husband agreed heartily.

Then while the others babbled, he withdrew a little from their talk. With all his heart, he was thinking, he wanted a fine wedding for Sadie, but just the same a big wedding would cost so much.

He needed a new wagon, a good secondhand wagon, and the horse was getting so old it was dying on its feet: but the business was doing good, thank God, so now he needed more money to work with. He had just arranged to buy from the new Rideout Mill all their noils and remnants with cash on the spot for every bale he bought. In the bank he had five, six hundred dollars, but suppose the next time he went to the Rideout Mill, they had five or six bales for him? It would take nearly every cent he had in the bank to pay cash for them. So where would he get money for the wedding? Maybe he'd have to borrow it. Whatever happened, he was glad he had the money, money like a wall to shut out the brawling world from which he had collected it, money like a wall to lean against when the need came.

He sipped his tea and munched the cookies, thinking that Sadie would have her big wedding. If it cost every cent he had in his pants pocket, every cent in the bank, Sadie would start her married life with a happy memory of her wedding. Yes, if he had to take down the bricks of his wall one by one until they were all gone, how better could he use the money? How else but let it melt away in the joy of his only daughter's wedding? He stroked his beard, looking out from under his thick black brows at his daughter's flushed and laughing face, her eyes bright with her happiness. "Yes," he said to himself, "yes, I'll take from the bank every cent if I have to." He looked across the table at his daughter. "So you're happy, hah, Sadie?"

"Oh, Pa, wonderfully!" she said. "But you know what I was just thinkin'?" Her face softened. "It'll be funny not to have you and Ma and Davey around— I'll be lonesome for you."

"G'wan," Dave said, "when you got eighteen kids to take care of, you won't have time to be lonesome!"

"Davey!" she exclaimed. "Ma, Pa, can't you stop him?"

His mother said: "I thought you were going out with some of your new friends tonight, Eddie."

Eddie Mundy pushed back the lock of hair he had been twist-

ing and untwisting while he memorized the declension of *mensa*, a table.

"I got too much studying to do," he said.

"But you haven't been out once this week," she said.

He pushed his book away and looked up at her. "You want me to get the best marks, don't you, Ma? . . . Well, there's only one way to do it."

She looked at his tense face, thinking soberly that it was too mature for a boy of fourteen. There was no laughter in it, and there were lines faintly showing in his forehead. "You've lost all your tan," she said.

He got up and went to look out of the narrow window. "I can't go out with those fellers. They're gonna start a wheel club and pay dues. Where would I get a wheel? or money for dues?"

"I'm sorry, Eddie," she said.

"Don't think I'm complainin', Ma. I'm not," he said quickly. "I can get along without those fellers. The only thing is—well, livin' in this place." He came back to the table and frowned down at his book.

"I know it's hard to get used to," she said.

He raised his head abruptly. "I hate it. I hate to sleep in the same room with Martha and Jenny. I hate to go down two flights if I want to go to the bathroom."

"And I hate washing clothes in a filthy cellar and washing dishes in a rusty sink," his mother said sharply.

"Let me go to work then," he said.

"Don't begin that again," Helen Mundy said. "I tell you, forget this now. Put your mind and your eyes forward. You're going to finish high school. Then you're going to college. You're going to amount to something. You hear me, Eddie?"

He nodded sullenly.

"Suppose you go to work now? What'll it get you? You'll end up clerking in a grocery store, or working on a machine. That's all. You'll get to be a dried-up little stick, cringing and scraping for every dime you get."

"Not me, Ma," he said. "Some day I'm gonna be rollin' in money. You'll see."

"Less promise and more performance, Eddie," she said brusquely.

"Don't worry about me," he told her, his eyes as direct as hers. "Don't worry about me. I've learned a few things the past few months." He turned back to the table and brought the kerosene lamp forward again over his book. "When'll Pa be home?" he asked, idly flipping the pages.

"How should I know?" she asked. "He's out seeing about a job, that's all I know."

She went into her room and came back with her sewing box. She began to darn socks. They were both quiet. Occasionally she looked across the table at him, but his head was bent over his book, and she did not speak. "God," she was praying, "let him have brains."

She had plenty of brains herself, but she had never had the chance to use them. She had been a schoolteacher, and her first teaching position in Williston had also been her last. Of all the young men who had been drawn to her dark snapping eyes and her dark-skinned good looks, she had picked Harry Mundy, chosen him deliberately and coolly, and was still wondering while she sat and darned his socks in an attic in the slums what quality she had failed to see in him that had landed her in such squalor. Quiet, yet not tongue-tied like the others—The Bumpkins, as she had lumped them together in her mind—soft-spoken, yet self-assured, and courting her in a vein of easy sentiment, he had seemed more like a brother than a lover.

They had been married only fifteen years—Eddie had come within a year of their marriage—but their progress as she looked back at it now had been steadily downhill. She had done her share, taking care of the chickens, doing other odd jobs around the farm. She had cooked for hired hands, she had sewn dresses for her little girls, and blouses and shirts for her son and husband—had done all these things uncomplainingly, thoroughly, while Harry had worked his heart and at last his strength out in the

fields. But they had gone downhill. Each year there was less return for their work; each year, it seemed, they had worked harder and got less. "I was a fool," she said to herself. She had realized early in her married life that it was not Harry's fault—it was farming that had defeated them. "I was a fool, I should've dragged him off that farm."

Little by little the fields went—here he sold a piece, and there the bank took a piece. But he had refused time and again to go. "I should've dragged him off. I was a fool to make a waste of my strength in a losing battle," and she felt that her own quiet endurance had betrayed her. "I should've screamed, torn my hair—and maybe we would have escaped this dirty trap." She looked quickly at Eddie whose hand was going round and round through his hair. She remembered how her arguments with Harry had run: "Is it because you have to be your own boss? Is that it?" she had asked him.

"No, that's not it," he had told her, "that's not it at all."

"What then, what is it makes you stay here? Is it the green grass and the babbling brooks?"

At this, he had smiled. There was no sentiment about the countryside in either of them. "You got a wicked sassy tongue."

"Then what is it?" she persisted. "In Heaven's name, what keeps you here breaking your back shoveling cowdung?"

"I don't know," he said, "I really don't know. But here I find myself, here I stay."

"You're not afraid to try your hand at something else, are you?" she asked. "Not afraid of being alone in the great big city, with hayseed in your hair?"

"You're a funny one," he said blandly. "No, I'm not afraid. But here I stay," he repeated, "until I'm pushed."

And pushed he had been, she reflected. Not a sudden push, but a long slow push, a moment of tottering, and here they were at the bottom. He had been indifferent, really indifferent.

"That's how it is," he said.

She had found these rooms, the cheapest she could find that

still were not mean enough to make her gag in them. And she had taken charge of what little money there was after the foreclosure. But Harry had been looking for a job for two months now, and the money was running low. When school began, she had had to outfit the children—all of them—with new shoes at least and so had further cut down the figures in the bank book.

Eddie was looking at her questioningly. "Got any cookies in the house?"

"Not a crumb," she told him.

"All right," he said, "I'll have pie. Or even strawberry shortcake." He turned back to his book.

"Go see if the girls are covered, will you, Eddie?"

"Sure." He got up.

He had the same noncommittal manner, the same curt humors that moved both Harry and her, she reflected. "Yes, he'll get there," she said to herself. "If I have anything to say about it." She rose, still handsome, even with the gauntness of her face and figure, and put her sewing away.

She returned to find Eddie at his Latin grammar again. "They're all right," he said. "Martha was halfway out on the floor nearly."

She sat down and pulled his algebra book to her, and leafed through the pages. "You could get a job out at the farm, working for the Cantrells," she had said to Harry. "They're hiring, I understand."

"I worked there once," he had told her, "that's enough."

She and Eddie sat quietly. After a time she helped him with his algebra.

About ten o'clock Harry came in. "No luck," he said, sitting down with them. "It was one of those canvassing propositions. They wanted a deposit of twenty-five dollars. There must've been thirty, forty others there. But I wouldn't have taken it anyway. It smelled to high Heaven."

"I'm going to try tomorrow myself," Helen Mundy said.

"Go ahead," he told her.

"You wouldn't, Ma!" Eddie said.

"Don't be such a softy, Eddie," she said flatly, "of course I will."

"You gonna let her, Pa?" Eddie asked.

"It's a free country," Harry said. Eddie looked hard at him, but there was no expression on his face. His light grayish eyes stared back calmly at his son.

"I've got to go uptown to the bank anyway," his mother said.

"Running low, are we?" Harry asked.

"Close to the ground," she told him.

"Bet you find something," he said to her.

"Bet she does," Eddie said challengingly.

"Don't get worked up, Eddie," his father told him. "Get your mother to read you a sweet poem while you rest on her lap."

"Aw, Pa, cut it out," Eddie said.

"He's got a great sense of humor, Eddie," his mother said. "Don't pay any attention to him." She shook her head at her husband, and he shrugged.

ARTHUR DAVIS, sitting in the parlor with his cigar, said to Louie as he came in: "Where have you been, Louis?"

"Out with the fellers," Louie said.

"Your school-work all done?"

"Yes, Father, I did it this afternoon."

"That's right, Louis. Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today."

"No, Father," Louie said.

His father tapped the end of his cigar lightly on the ashtray and looked at the glowing point reflectively. "What did you and the boys do?" he asked.

"Oh, we just hung around for a while and then went down to the Turk's for ice cream."

"The Turk's, Louis?"

"Yes, Father—you know, that ice cream place on Hamblin Street."

"You had enough money to go to an ice cream parlor?"

"Yes, Father—I saved it outa my allowance."

"It did not occur to you, Louis, to put the money in your bank?"

"No, Father."

"I have told you, Louis, a penny saved is a penny earned."

"I know, Father, but I didn't have to spend the money. One of the fellers treated the whole bunch." Now, now, I'll ask him, he thought. "Father?"

"Yes, Louis?"

"We're starting a club, a wheel club—it's Mr. Tanner, our botany teacher's idea. Do you—will you, that is, I was wondering—will you buy me a wheel?" he burst out desperately at last.

His father smiled, pursing his rosy lips. "You must think I'm made of money, Louis."

"But, Father—"

"You will learn some day, Louis, the value of money, of thrift."

"But, Father, I thought—"

"Yes, Louis?"

"I thought that with Phil Cantrell in the club—"

"Mr. Harvey Cantrell's son, you mean?"

I knew that would get you, you mean old miser, Louie thought. "Yes, Father, Phil was the one who treated us to the ice cream. He's the treasurer of the club, and next week we're having a meeting at his house. But there's no sense going if I don't have a wheel."

His father laid his cigar down. "I'm very glad, Louis," he said, "that you are going with the right boys. You recall how often I have told you that a man is known by the company he keeps?"

"But I can't go with Phil if I haven't got a wheel," Louie said quickly.

"Well, my boy," Arthur Davis said, "under the circumstances, you may have the wheel. . . . You say you are meeting soon?"

"Yes, Father." He tried hard to hide his exultation.

"Tomorrow, Louis, you may give me your bank. I will have it opened."

"But, Father!" Louie exclaimed, "that money, I saved it up for myself. I—" He could not say that he had saved the money for Irene's birthday present.

His father said: "The wheel is for yourself, is it not?"

"Yes, Father."

"Then hold your tongue. . . . I don't like your attitude in this whole matter."

"I'm sorry, Father."

"See that you're not sorrier," his father said.

Louie thought of the cellar. He said: "I just meant, Father . . . I didn't mean anything."

Arthur Davis drew on his cigar. He went on as if Louie had not spoken. "Tomorrow I will inquire about the cost of a wheel, a good secondhand one. If the money you have in your bank is not sufficient, then I will draw some from my own bank. . . . Yes, I want my son to have as much as the next boy."

"Thank you, Father."

"That's better, my boy," Arthur Davis said. "Much better. Now you may go to bed."

"Yes, Father. . . . Good-night, Father." Going up the stairs, he said to himself: "The mean ol' miser. A secondhand wheel. . . . But I'm gonna have one just the same. . . . I hope he does have to take money out of his bank."

When he got to the landing, his mother called out: "Everything all right, Louie?"

"Yes, Ma," he said, "good-night. . . . Everything's fine."

JOHN CANTRELL realized while he was walking home from Harvey's that he really had not enough understanding to write the history of the commercial life of Persepolis. He was thinking of what Harvey had told him about Connell's services, and he said to himself: "Harvey didn't tell me all of it." He wondered just when it had begun—the tie-up between business and politics, wondered at just what point in the country's history the country's growth had begun to strain against, and sometimes run counter to, the laws of the country. Was it possible, he asked himself, that in the nature of things business could not run side by side with government?—that they were so opposed in their beliefs and their uses

that there was a constant conflict between them and the country always moved in a kind of precarious balance between them?

He shook his head slowly, and heard the loud lonely clack of his heels in the crisp night air. Business, he reflected, was the forcer of life, government the controller. If business ran without restraint, it would grow like a cancer in the wild desire of growth that was the meaning of its existence. It had to grow or die. It was what Harvey had always maintained about the Bank. But if the government restrained it, as the City Council or the State Utilities Commission might have restrained the establishment of the power-plant, or as Teddy Roosevelt was trying to restrain the Trusts, then it could not grow so wildly as to consume finally the very stuff on which it fed and so destroy itself. . . .

He turned the corner into Hamblin Street, and would not have noticed the boys until they stopped and spoke to him. "How'd you like the picture show, Phil?" he asked, and Phil said:

"Gee, Cousin John, we just saw something more exciting than moving pictures even."

They told him about Paul Sakarian and Lily and Jack Smith, and he listened to their young voices with pleasure, relieved for a time from the compulsion of his thought.

But after he said "Good-night" to them, he found himself musing once again, thinking not only of his and Harvey's project and its meaning, but now since his anger had drained off completely, with sadness of Marius. He felt weary, as if in losing Marius, he had lost part of himself. He did not want to think any more. He wanted to get home to the quiet of his room and read over what he had written so far in his chronicle of Persepolis, thinking that maybe in his account of the remote and simpler life of the '40's and '50's, particularly its business life, he might find an answer to the questions that against his will turned and returned in his mind. And all the while as he paced tiredly down the street, he knew he was afraid that what Marius had asserted was true in spite of Harvey's easy denial and indulgent laughter, afraid that he had given up the principles of his creed for the pleasures of the deed.

It's not right, he told himself sadly, that we used Francis. Not right, an evil thing to corrupt the controller. And yet—and yet—could the growth be controlled? Had it not already come to him from the history of the city that life made its own path and the conditions of its growth? The Bank and the power-plant had grown naturally to meet the needs of life in the city, had grown as naturally as a tree out of the ground. And as a tree made its own shape, so did business, containing already in itself, in its seed, the ways and the shape of its growth. It was foolish then to talk of antitrust laws or any other illusions men had about restraining such growth. All they could do was force for a time perhaps a growth in a different direction, but they could not really change, could not really turn the banks, the businesses, the industries from their inborn destiny. No, not unless they rooted them out, rooted them out completely. And then they would leave a barren place, a desert with no life at all.

"Crazy," John Cantrell told himself, "I'm plain crazy. I'm not the man to figure these things out, I haven't the head for them. A while ago I thought I knew everything. And now, in these past few months, I've found I know nothing. I've got to start all over again. I was retired, practically lying in my coffin, and now I've come alive again. Maybe," he murmured, "I'll find out something certain before I die." He was nearly home, and he quickened his pace, feeling the deepening chill of the October night. "Old bones," he said to himself, aware of the first twinge of winter in the stump of his left arm, "and a new wound," thinking of Marius.

All through Josie's wedding in Saint Timothy's he kept hoping that Marius would show up. Even while he was giving Josie away, he had one eye cocked back towards the door for him. He had told Josie that he had had a fight with Marius and that he did not think that Marius would come, but had not told her what the fight was about. He was glad that after her first exclamations she had seen his reluctance to talk about it and had not asked him any more questions, glad that he would not have to make any evasive answers so as not to upset her by what Marius had

said about Francis and the Cantrells.

But she was worried about the melancholy that he could not wholly conceal. She and Francis were going East for three or four weeks on their honeymoon, but after the reception at home she let her father know that she was worrying about him even at the moment that they were leaving for the railroad station. "You're to let me know at once if you need me, you understand, Father?" she said in a low voice while the guests milled about in the hall and spilled out over the front steps, the rice dribbling from their hands. "I want you to promise me."

"Godalmighty, Josie, what's the matter with you?" he told her. "You'd think I was a two-year-old. Don't be such a hen!"

"Just the same . . ." she murmured. "I've told Delia—"

"Delia! For God's sake, Josie, why don't you wrap me up in cotton batting till you get back?"

This irritation was more like him, and she smiled as Francis came up, saying: "We'll have to hurry, Josie."

The two men shook hands, she kissed her father, murmuring: "Now remember . . ." and then she and Francis were gone out into the giggles and screams of the women and the shower of rice.

Then he was alone, and the black melancholy that fell upon him fought against his joy in Josie's marriage. But he found some relief in the next week or so by plunging furiously at his work out on the river and scribbling late into the night on his manuscript.

When Delia tapped timidly on his door, and said: "Mister John, it's after twelve, and I promised Miss Josie—" he answered ferociously:

"You go away, Delia, or I'll come out there and cut your head off!" and grinned as he heard the flapping scurry of her slippers down the hall.

This was on the 18th or 19th of October. In the night of the 22nd he awoke to find Delia bending over him, shaking him vigorously. He started up, exclaiming: "Godalmighty, Delia, what's the matter? Josie—?"

"I dunno, Mister John," she said. "Mister Harvey Cantrell wants to talk with you on the telephone."

"What's he want this hour of the night?" he grumbled, swinging, still dazed with sleep, out of the bedclothes. Maybe somebody's sick, he thought, maybe Eulalia's had a turn for the worse. He went quickly down the stairs to the telephone on the wall. "Hello—Harvey?" he said.

Harvey's voice, a little strained, came to him: "John?"

"Yes, yes. What is it? What's the matter, Harvey?"

"I'm sorry to bother you at this hour of the night, John, but there's some trouble maybe."

"Well, get it out," the old man said impatiently. "Somebody sick? Your mother, father, all right?"

"I just had a call from Bill Goulding, the night man down at the *Chronicle*," Harvey said. "He tells me he just got a flash from the *Associated Press* that the Knickerbocker Trust in New York had an all-day run and won't open tomorrow, and that there's other banks all over the country in trouble. There's a shortage of cash, and God knows we're low in our cash reserve ourselves. Father is worried nearly crazy, and he's got me nearly crazy, too."

"How'd he know about it?"

"Well, he was downstairs here reading when Goulding called, so naturally he answered the phone. . . . Now he's nearly out of his head with worry, and we've sent for the doctor to try and calm him down."

John said: "And how about you, Harvey. You worried?"

"Naturally, I am, a little," Harvey said, "but there's really nothing to worry about. The Bank's sound, I give you my solemn word on that, John. It's just that if we have a run, we may not be able to pay out the cash. I've already sent out a dozen wires, but frankly . . ." He paused for a long time.

John said impatiently: "Hello! hello, Harvey?"

"I'm still here," Harvey said. "Frankly, I was going to say, we can't stand a long run. I even asked Goulding to play the story down, but he says it can't be done. All the out-of-town papers

that come in will carry the story anyway. . . . Y'know," he said, "I had a chance to buy that paper a few years ago, but Father wouldn't have it."

"Godalmighty, Harvey, now's no time to be talking about buying a newspaper!" John said. "What're you going to do about the Bank?"

"Just hope and pray, I guess," Harvey said. "Hope and pray that a lot of silly chuckle-headed folks won't be running down to the Bank tomorrow, bawling for their money. . . . But Father says they will. He keeps raving about the panic of '92. I hope to Heaven I can keep him home, that's all."

"You think maybe I could calm him down, Harvey?"

"That's why I called you," Harvey told him. "Could you come down to the Bank early tomorrow morning, say about seven, instead of going out to the river? Will you?"

"Of course, I will," John said strongly.

"Maybe you'll be able to cool Father off."

"I hope so."

"Then I'll hang up," Harvey said. "Good night."

"'Night," John said.

When he was in bed again, he thought: Well, I'm up to my neck in it now. I'm being swept along. . . . He wondered if the Bank were really as sound as Harvey said, wondered if the shortage of cash was due to their borrowing from the Bank's funds. Of course, it must be, he told himself. . . . It had been easy for him to speculate about the life of the Bank, but now that his life and security were tied into it. . . . Well, he knew one thing: he did not feel any guilt. We didn't make it, he told himself. If other banks, bigger banks, are having trouble, then it's something beyond our doing. Something's strained in the country somehow, he thought drowsily now, something's out of balance again, thinking of the money panics of 1837 and 1859 that he had been writing about in his manuscript. It'll come out all right, he assured himself, but somebody'll have to suffer for it. Someone always has. It can't be helped, I guess. Sleep came strongly upon him, his thought no

longer held together, and he fell into a deep but uneasy slumber in which he dreamed that he and Marius were pummeling one another.

IN THE MORNING it was crisp with a cool wind blowing. The trees on the streets had just turned color, and already their deep-notched leaves were strewn in the gutters and blew along the sidewalks.

About a quarter to nine a couple of kids on their way to the Motley Street Grammar School walked in the gutters, kicking up the leaves before them as they went. When they turned into Congress Square, one of them said: "Look!—a parade!" and pointed to the long line of men and women straggling down the sidewalk and up to the doors of the Farmers and Mechanics Bank.

"Nah," the other said, "it's not a parade. It was in the paper this mornin'—they're trying to get in the bank to get their money out. My ol' man and my ol' lady was talkin' about it."

"Whaddo I care?" the first kid said. "My ol' man ain't got any money in the bank anyways."

They went up onto the sidewalk, and lingered along the line of people, staring curiously at the worried faces and at patrolmen Mike Sheehan, Arthur Donovan, and Ed Smalley, who paced back and forth and stopped occasionally to talk with someone in the line. A good many people held the *Chronicle*, and read over and over again the headlines of its leading story:

MONEY PANIC SWEEPS COUNTRY
NEW YORK BANK CLOSES DOORS
OWING DEPOSITORS \$60,000,000
TERRIFIC RUN FORCES KNICKER-
BOCKER TRUST TO SUSPEND

WILDEST DAY IN GENERATION

Stocks Slump \$6 to \$8 a Share, Money Soars to 70 Per Cent,
and Appeal to Cortelyou Brings Him Immediately to New
York—Morton Trust Issues Statement.

In the next column, the anxious eyes skipped through the speech that Teddy Roosevelt had made down in Nashville:

There has been trouble in the stock market, in the high financial world, during the past few months. The statement has frequently been made that the policies for which I stand, legislative and executive, are responsible for that trouble. Now, Gentlemen, these policies of mine can be summed up in one brief sentence. They represent the effort to punish successful dishonesty. I doubt if these policies have had any material effect in bringing about the present trouble, but if they have, it will not alter in the slightest degree my determination that for the remaining 16 months of my term these policies shall be persevered in unswervingly. . . . No man will stand more strongly than I will in the defense of property so long as it is honestly acquired and honestly used. (Cheers.) I will stand against the poor man if he does wrong, just as I will stand against the rich man if he does wrong. I will stand against crimes of brutal violence just as I stand against crimes of unscrupulous cunning. A crime is a crime, and it makes no difference whether the wrong is perpetrated by a plutocracy or a mob; by a capitalist or a wage-worker.

Shuffling restlessly, the people read the speech, and as they looked up from the paper, felt the line moving slowly forward, and craned their necks to see the lucky ones coming out of the Bank stuffing their money into their pockets and hurrying away to work. They took a quick look through the rest of the paper, and talked once in a while in low tones to people ahead of them or behind them, or turned back again to Teddy's speech while pace by pace the line moved up, lengthening steadily every minute, the newcomers with their fresh copies of the *Chronicle* reading Teddy's words hurriedly, their eyes picking out the phrases: "Successful dishonesty . . . the present trouble . . . the rich man if

he does wrong . . . crimes of unscrupulous cunning . . . A crime is a crime."

The phrases turned and turned slowly in their heads, and they watched the kids running to school, and said absently: "Nice cool weather, ain't it?" and made small talk, watching one another's anxious eyes. "The boss'll be fit to be tied," they said once in a while, "but I can't help it. . . . The old lady made me come," and moved quickly to fill up the gaps in the line as it still moved and climbed the steps of the Bank. They did not look up at the late-comers arriving breathless, whose eyes pleaded with them to be let into the line, but yet had to hurry down to its tailend, while they looked back every second or two to make sure that the head of the line was still moving.

"Now, now, take it easy," Patrolman Mike Sheehan said, wondering why Bess hadn't showed up yet, and, "Now, now, nothin' to worry about," Patrolman Art Donovan said, wondering if he could slip a kid a quarter to run up to his house, 89A Bedford Street, second floor, and tell his wife, Genevieve, to hurry right down with the bankbook, and, "Now, now, don't get excited," Patrolman Ed Smalley said, feeling the bankbooks, his and his old man's, tucked neatly away into the inside pocket of his tunic, and wondering how the hell he was going to get inside to present them, praying that the old man would come along so that he could slip him the books and find a place in line for him, saying: "Now, now, men, give the poor old feller a chance," making believe the old man was a stranger.

"Now, now, don't get excited," he said to Massimo Cascione, who stumbled along the sidewalk with Joe pulling at his arm, saying: "Lissen, Pa, you can't get in there, lissen, come on down to the end," while the old man turned his blank eyes stiffly in his head and moved blindly away from the others, who, closing up tight the little gaps between them where he tried to force himself in, turned a solid front against him, and said: "Skiddoo, Mister. . . . Sorry, Mister, this is my place. . . . Beat it, Mister. . . . You

shoulda set the alarm-clock, Mister," and watched him turn and try again a little farther on, holding the bankbook tightly in his knotted hand and falling back little by little to the end of the line without hearing Joe's voice saying: "Here comes the cop, Pa, come on down to the end. Come on, Pa," arriving at last at the end of the line around on Hamblin Street where he couldn't even see the Bank and where already people were lining up behind him and where, every time the line moved forward, he filled up the gap with one stiff stride as Joe yanked at his sleeve.

At ten o'clock the *Chronicle* appeared on the streets with an extra, and Indie Whipple with the other newsboys leaning sideways under the load on their hips, went up and down the line, yelling: "Extra! extra!" Indie caught sight of Morris Bandler in the line and gave him a paper hurriedly, saying, "There you are, Mr. Bandler, there it is," and moved off at once before Morris could pay him. The papers fluttered a little in the cool wind as the people unfolded them and read that on the floor of the Stock Exchange the Bank of Montreal had loaned \$200,000 at 125 per cent, that police in New York had used their clubs freely on excited depositors, that the Philadelphia Exchange Bank had closed its doors after an all-day run and would not reopen, that brokers, overjoyed by his reassurance, had cheered J. P. Morgan. Then their eyes caught the black-ruled box at the bottom of the page and read the boldface type slowly:

KEEP AWAY FROM THE BANKS

The only danger threatening the banking institutions of this city is the needless alarm of anxious depositors. It is the opinion of the *Persepolis Chronicle* that every depositor in a Persepolis bank or trust company should refrain from excited withdrawal of his money at a time when the chief trouble is the difficulty of these institutions in obtaining cash.

Keep away from the banks yourself and advise nervous and ignorant persons who do not understand the situation to do the same!

They read the notice, and then they looked up from the paper at one another and saw that no one had moved; they stayed in their places, craning their necks to see the people still going, a few at a time, into the Bank. While the line hitched forward slowly, they turned to the inside pages and read that the moving pictures, *A Child of the Regiment* and *The Cowboy and the Squaw* were playing at the Scenic Temple, that Schaeffer's was having a special sale on Napoleon Boots for women, that the U. S. balloon in the St. Louis Bennett Cup race had landed in Hamilton, Ont., a flight of more than 600 miles, that Duryea's Gloss Starch could now be had in a handy family size, that General Maximoffsky, head of the Russian prisons, had been shot six times with a revolver by Mlle. Ragozinnikova because of his cruelty to political prisoners, that during the legislative investigation of the recent elections in Stanton a colony of "repeaters" had been concealed in a Turkish Bath establishment and were rushed to the polls when they were needed, that Ed Brant's chestnut gelding, Coiner, had taken the 2:29 trot in straight heats in the harness meeting at Burgin City.

And while they read, they kept looking up the street towards the Bank, some of them holding their bankbooks in their hands and feeling sometimes a terrible urgency to break out of the line, run past the policemen, and hurl themselves through the doors with hands outstretched, crying: "Here's my book, give me my money. Give me my money!" as they pushed the little gray book with the much-read figures through the wicket.

Still the line kept shuffling forward till shortly after twelve o'clock when the factory whistles had stopped blowing, and the workingmen, hurrying away from their unopened lunchpails, began to stream into the Square. A big squad of policemen suddenly showed up and started pushing the newcomers up onto the sidewalk so that some people who had been waiting for hours found themselves shoved out of place and struggled vainly to get back into the now disordered line. "Come on, now, straighten it out," said the police; but while they were struggling to make

order again, the word ran through the crowd that the doors of the Bank had just been closed. They looked, and it was true. For a moment they were stunned with the shock. Cora Davis who had been standing in the line for three hours screamed and fainted.

Then after swirling aimlessly for a moment, they began slowly, at first, to move upon the Bank. The police tried to check them, but were pushed slowly back even after they pulled their clubs and began to threaten people. The crowd was quiet, but it moved forward steadily, and the police, forced back to the steps of the Bank, got set to fight back a charge, when the doors of the Bank suddenly opened and shut again quickly behind John Cantrell who stood bareheaded between the two gray pillars at the bank entrance, and held up his hand for attention. The crowd quieted down then, straining to hear what he would say, murmuring to one another: "Sh!—it's that old soldier, Cantrell. He's a director of the Bank. Sh!—he's got some news for us."

Just as the old man had started through the doors, Archer had stopped him and held out his revolver to him, saying: "You better take this, Mr. Cantrell. I wouldn't trust that mob."

John had pushed the gun aside, and said sharply: "Don't be a fool." He felt no fear as he looked down into the faces upturned to him. He knew what he wanted to say—he had told Will and Harvey that they could trust him to say the right thing.

Will had lifted his haggard face and clenched his trembling hands together. "I'm the one that ought to talk. It's my responsibility. . . . I should never have given in to you and Harvey on this power-plant business. . . . I'm the president, I've ruined the Bank. Harvey, will you send some more wires?" He babbled incoherently at them while Albert Seymour, the youngest cashier, whispered nervously to Harvey:

"Here's some more wires, Mr. Cantrell."

Harvey, pacing back and forth in contempt of both his father and the grayfaced people who had been hurrying up to the wickets, had kept saying over and over: "Father, don't be a fool. There's nothing to worry about, I tell you. The Bank's all right.

We'll have cash in a day or two. For God's sake, calm down!" but had finally turned to John, asserting: "It's no use. Unless we stop this run, we've got to close the doors. For God's sake, talk to Father, tell him it's all right, he's off his head nearly."

But when John spoke to him, Will Cantrell had not seemed to hear him. He sat bent over his desk, whispering: "Only God can save us now, only a miracle. It's my fault. . . . I let you do it, Harvey. . . . You're young, you didn't know what you were doing. . . . This is the end."

"Pull yourself together, Will," John had told him. "Harvey's right, there's nothing to worry about. The Bank's sound. You know it is."

"My fault, all my fault," the other mumbled, "taking chances, gambling with their money, deceiving the depositors."

Harvey, nearly at the end of his patience, had shouted: "It's a lie, there's been no deceiving anyone. A lie, a lie!"

"Cool off, Harvey," John had said. "He doesn't know what he's saying. . . ."

"I'm going out to speak to them," Will had said suddenly, wavering to his feet. "Beg them to forgive me," he muttered, "throwing away their money on Harvey's wildcat schemes." He stared about him wildly, and John took his arm and gently forced him back into the chair.

"Now, Will," he said, "you're not strong enough to speak right now. . . . Let Harvey speak to them."

"Harvey's a gambler," Will said. "Harvey's a liar. He's deceived us all." His hands twisted and untwisted on the smooth somber oak of his desk.

"You're out of your head, Father," Harvey said harshly.

"You stay here with him," John murmured. "I'll go speak to the crowd. Maybe I can get them to go."

"But what can you say?" Harvey had asked.

"I don't know yet, Harvey, but trust me to think of something. . . . I know these people, and a good many of them know me."

But now standing between the pillars and looking down at the faces, feeling the weight of their eyes heavy with rage and fear, he felt unsure of himself and afraid. The fact was that they had entrusted their money to the Bank, and now they wanted it back. It didn't matter why, it was theirs, they wanted it, and the Bank should have it for them. But the Bank did not have it. The Bank had built it into the walls of the power-plant out on the river. For their sake, it was true, but . . .

A harsh murmur came up to him. He had to speak, had to beg them to go away without their money. He lifted his head, and took a deep breath against the pounding of his heart. "Ladies and gentlemen," he called out, "conditions over which no man has any control have put a strain on banks all over the country. But I assure you that this bank is sound, that you have nothing to fear, no one will lose a single penny of his deposits, provided"—his voice wavered, and he sucked air into his lungs—"provided you will give us two or three days in which to bring some cash. Provided you will go away now and be a little patient."

They stood in heavy silence, without moving, and he thought in heavy despair: They won't move, they aren't even listening.

Someone yelled: "Give's our money!" and the crowd surged a little with a long slow movement like a thick ground swell.

He raised his voice again: "I tell you your money is safe. I beg you to believe me. If you will just be patient, in a day or so you will get all your money if you still want it. But I beg you now not to make a needless, senseless panic."

"We want our money!" a woman's voice said shrilly, and again the crowd surged uneasily, undecided, waiting for the word that would dissolve it or else send it thundering up the stairs.

I got to move them, John Cantrell told himself desperately, I got to move them before I turn my back on them. He took breath again; his legs were trembling. But before he could speak, he heard a commotion behind him and a long hiss of excitement from the crowd. He turned his head and saw Will, his white hair disheveled, his tie awry on his bare neck and his collar crumpled

in his hand, just struggling free from Harvey's grasp in the doorway and running wildly to his side. "Godalmighty, Will!" he exclaimed. "Get back—what're you going to do?" He was unnerved by the wildness of his cousin's eyes, the paleness of his contorted face.

Will paid no attention to him, but half-yelled, half-screamed out at the crowd: "It is my sin. I confess. . . ." He gasped. "My greed, my family's greed, has wasted your savings. But it's my sin. I could've prevented it." So shrill his voice, so panting his utterance, the crowd could not quite make out his words, but his agitation, his wildness were plain to all, and a heavy muttering came up from them, and they surged closer in one long movement.

John grasped his cousin's arm. "Will! Will! for God's sake, go back! You're only frightening them," he said. Then Harvey sprang forward, and he and John together seized the panting old man and dragged him back to the doors.

The crowd went out of control. The sight of the two men dragging the other back had proved that there was something to hide from them, that the old man, so wild, so crazy, had blurted out things that the others did not want them to hear. They fought the police who struggled to hold them, and their feet thundered upon the stairs.

Inside, Harvey turned quickly from his father and tried to help Archer shut the heavy bronze doors, while Will, panting heavily, leaned with John's support against the shelf that ran in front of the tellers' cages. Harvey and Archer were nearly too late. Before they could shut the doors, a few men and one woman had charged through them. Then the doors slammed to, and the little group that had got through faced John Cantrell across the marble floor.

Archer's gun was in his hand, and John said: "Put that gun away, you fool, before you hurt someone!"

The others, breathing hard, their clothing rumpled, were staring at the gun.

"You going to shoot us down because we want our money?" Helen Mundy said.

"You can all get out of here," Harvey said. "This is private property, you can't run a riot on us. . . . Go away peaceably, you'll get your money."

"I suppose you'll be kissin' us good-by if we go away," Mike Tait said, "but here's my book, and I want my money. It's my life you're holdin' back, Mister."

There was a quiet after his words.

"I can't give you your money now," Harvey said after a moment. "It would make an even worse riot if we paid some and not the others."

Morris Bandler said: "Why are you waiting? Look, here's the book, so gimme my money."

"I'm American, I got my first papers," Paul Sakarian murmured, "I don' unnerstan'. Where's the money I give you to hold for me?"

"You'll have to get out now," Harvey told them. "You can go out the side-door. Can't you understand me?—I tell you you'll have your money in two days at the most."

"You'd no right to gamble with our money," Helen Mundy said. "You're a thief, that's what you are. A swindler."

Massimo Cascione lowered his head and charged forward out of the group. He came, before anyone could stop him, within a few feet of John and Will Cantrell, and pointed his blunt finger at them. "I know you, Mister!" he shouted at John. "You steal farms. You steal my money, you steal my farm!"

He spat at them, and John Cantrell, recognizing him, stepped forward; but before he could speak, Will screamed out: "You, what are you doing here? Have you come to rob us? You'll kill us all!" His voice dropped to a husky whisper. He shook his head and looked vaguely at them. "I'm a thief," he said, "yes, I'm a thief." He knelt on the floor in front of Massimo. "I'm a gambler, I took your money and gambled it away. I confess." He struck himself heavily upon the breast.

John leaned forward and took him by the arm. He's crazy, he

thought, really out of his head. "Get up, Will," he said. "Get up. You're not a thief."

Will struggled halfway up, but suddenly he clawed at his throat and threw his head back, a deep flush flooded into his paper-white face, and he lurched sideways out of John's grasp and fell.

He's dead, John thought, and as Harvey came running up, they faced each other across Will's body.

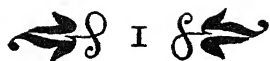
"Not my fault, John," Harvey said, his face already twisted with his grief.

"No, not your fault, but whose? Whose?" John said dreamily, looking around at them all. "Mine?"

SOMETHING OF A HERO

BOOK TWO





WEARING white flannels and a dark blue coat with a Liberty Bond pin in the lapel, Francis Connell stepped carefully over the thick light-cable running across the floor of the bandstand and came forward to the railing. The night was hot, the crowd stirred restlessly, and he waited, rolling his handkerchief between his wet palms while the band massed behind him finished playing *America*. The arc lights set up by the Farmers and Mechanics Light & Power Company shone full into his eyes, and he blinked a little in their white glare. Below and in front of him sat the companies of the National Guard. With the glare in his eyes he was aware of the men only as a dark solid mass, and he wondered what they were thinking, what they were feeling, knowing that in the morning they were to leave their homes and their country to get ready to go into the trenches in France. I know how I would feel, he thought, if I had to go—if I had to leave Josie and young Tommy. He peered down at the soldiers, but he could not see their faces.

The music stopped. He cleared his throat, and made a stiff little bow to Judge Woodward who sat looking stolidly out at the black mass of the crowd and to his father-in-law, John Cantrell, sitting very straight, the light shining upon his silvery hair. Then he said: "Fellow citizens! On the eve of another anniversary of our coun-

try's struggle for liberty and freedom, we are gathered together to make our farewells to these young men seated here before they leave tomorrow on their great adventure." He paused. The crowd was very still. "They leave to plant the Stars and Stripes beside the flags of our Allies, somewhere in Flanders' fields; they leave to crush the barbarian hordes who threaten in their madness and lust for power to destroy the civilization of the whole world." The sweat was starting on his brows, and he ran his handkerchief across his forehead. "The Kaiser and his savage Huns will be wiped from the face of the earth by American soldiers reared in the creed of 'life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.'" He paused again, and a voice in the night roared: "Kill the Kaiser!" A wild flurry of handclapping followed the words.

Francis held his hand up. "And I know," he said, "that they will not rest till they have set up Old Glory in the streets of Berlin and hanged Kaiser Bill to the highest tree in all Germany!" The crowd's roar rolled up to him.

Sitting a little way up the slope of the hill away from the crowd so that Francis's words came very faintly to them were Louie Davis and Irene Curtis. "He's certainly got them worked up," Irene said. "But I bet he's not going off to the trenches."

Louie said in a low voice: "And neither am I."

She wished she had bitten her tongue off before she had spoken. "I didn't mean it, Louie," she said, "not that way—all I meant was, does he have to make it sound so bloody? That's what I meant. That's all."

"I met Amby Tait and Al Schaeffer a while ago," he said, "when I was coming up to get you—they're enlisting tomorrow. I felt funny when they told me. I couldn't say anything."

"Please, Louie," she said, "let's not talk about it again. You promised me you wouldn't enlist. You promised!" She drew his arm close to her side. "What would I do—how could I live, expecting to hear every day that you—"

"It's not right," he interrupted her, "it's not right. Nearly all the guys I know are enlisting. Amby and Al aren't the only

ones. . . . How d'you think I feel when the kids on the street yell 'Slacker!' at me?"

"I'll die if you go," she said. "Louie, I'll die!"

The faraway voice boomed again. ". . . in the hearts of all Frenchmen at the news that American troops will soon be landing to throw back the invader. . . ."

Marius Schaeffer shook his head angrily at the applause that rattled around him. "Words! words!" he muttered to Emily. "He is reading their death warrant to those poor boys in the uniforms."

"Please, Marius," Emily said, "I knew you'd be like this. Please, come home."

Stubbornly he shook his head. "Stay, and find out, Emily, what sheep people can be!"

"But if it upsets you so to listen—"

"Sh!" he said, "he's beginning again."

Francis's arm was in the air, and before the applause had wholly died away, he was speaking: "I know that the courage of our soldiers was instilled by their fathers and mothers, and that the one great institution on which the greatness of America stands has not failed her in this hour of crisis. I refer, of course, to the American home, the very cradle of American ideals." He waited, but the crowd did not applaud. The hot still night hung over them. He knew he had said enough. It was time to stop. "But why should I go on?" he said. "Let us all face the future with confidence unshaken, with hearts untouched by fear, knowing that soon, very soon, our boys will return, glorious victors from Over There!" He bowed and stepped back. The applause like a great wave washed up to him, surged, receded, and rose again steadily. When it showed no sign of diminishing, he half-turned and made a gesture towards Sergeant Peterson, the band leader.

The instruments glittered as the men raised them. The music spoke: O COLUMBIA THE GEM OF THE OCEAN THE HOME OF THE BRAVE AND THE FREE THE SHRINE OF EACH PATRIOT'S DEVOTION A WORLD OFFERS HOMAGE TO THEE. . . .

In the pause between the subsiding of the music and Francis's

next words, a bull-voice roared out of the crowd: "Kill the Kaisher! Kill the sonofa—" The voice was abruptly stifled.

Standing a little to one side of the platform, Lieutenant Maurice Kelly muttered to Sergeant Mike Sheehan: "See if you c'n locate that drunk, Mike," and then raised his head to listen as Francis's face swam forward again in the white wash of light from the arc lamps.

"Our next speaker is well-known to all of you for his many years of service to this city. I take great pleasure in presenting to you the Honorable Frederick G. Woodward, Justice in the Superior Court of this county. . . . Judge Woodward."

The judge rose and came forward, bending his head into the white glare of the lights. He waited a moment and then made a sweeping gesture with both hands outward. "Mr. Chairman and ladies and gentlemen. My good friend, Councilman Connell, so long distinguished in his service to this community, has spoken so well that there remains little for me to say. . . ."

"They should be reading the service for the dead—not making speeches," Marius said.

"Sh!" said the people behind him, "sh!"

"Come home, Marius," Emily said. "You know how furious you get when he speaks."

"I thought Albert was going to meet us here," he said.

"That's what he told me—I told him exactly where we'd be sitting."

"Sh!" said the people around them, "sh!"

". . . but what can we do, we stay-at-homes, we older people who have not the young strength of our soldier boys—what can we do to aid them and our country in this hour of our common crisis?" Judge Woodward asked. "What can we do as our share in this great struggle of democracy against tyranny? The answer is plain."

"Sure—kill the Kaisher! Kill the bastard!" the voice yelled from a different quarter in the crowd. Laughter boiled up into the night.

"Couldn't ye find him, Mike?" Lieutenant Kelly asked. "Try again. Take Smalley with ye."

Judge Woodward spoke again, slowly and roundly, shaping each word carefully before he let it go into the night, into the black crowd lost in the great field of the night. "As I said before the answer is plain—we must not think that liberty is license." Slowly he turned and drank from the glass of water on the little table beside him.

In the pause, Louie turned to Irene again. "Maybe it would be over before I got there, Irene. Y'know, they don't go right over to France. They got to be trained in camp first."

"I won't listen, Louie," she said, "I won't listen to you." His thin face with the light hair strewn over his forehead made him look like a little boy again, and her heart contracted in love and fear. "Please, Louie, don't talk about it any more."

"I would write to you every day," he said, "Irene . . . ?"

She shook her head.

"But supposing the draft gets me anyway?" he told her. "What's the difference?"

She was silent. Then she said bitterly: "You sound as if you were anxious to leave me!"

"Irene, no! I'd rather die than leave you. If it wasn't for you, I'd—" He broke off and said in a lower tone: "All right, Irene. I won't mention it any more."

"I love you," she whispered. "I'm your girl, Louie."

"Forever?"

"Forever and forever, Louie, till the day we die."

"You promise?" he asked.

"Yes, Louie, I promise. I promise. . . ."

"In this crisis," boomed the judge, "let each man know and find his place and be content in it—the farmer at his plow, the worker at his machine, the merchant at his counter, the banker at his desk."

"And the soldier in his grave," Marius said loudly. "The soldier in his grave—let him be content."

Emily seized his arm. "Marius, are you crazy? You want to be mobbed?" She looked around at the people near them.

"Sh!" they told her, "sh!"

"Why doesn't Albert come?" Marius asked peevishly.

"We can go without him," she said eagerly.

He shook his head. "Listen . . ." he said.

"Let us," said Judge Woodward, "resist with all our power those mean and discontented thinkers who in this time of crisis would make a mock of our great American institutions and beliefs, all in the sacred name of liberty—men like Eugene Debs, for example, who would lead us into the road of violence and anarchy."

"Or men like Woodrow Wilson," said Marius violently to his wife, "to lead us into the road of militarism and death!"

"Keep quiet," said the voices behind him. "Pipe down!" they said. "Shut up!"

Emily said: "For Heaven's sake, Marius, I've a mind to go and leave you here. They've come to hear him, not you!"

"Lies!" he said, "all lies . . . !"

". . . to show proper respect for and obedience towards those leaders of the nation's life whom God in his wisdom has chosen to guide us in these fateful days," Judge Woodward said. "Thank you."

When the judge sat down, Francis came forward and announced a song by the 9A class of the Motley Street School under the leadership of Miss Verna Pulsifer, music instructor in the public schools.

While the children were singing, John Cantrell was troubled by an elusive memory. He groped for it, and suddenly it came to him: "The old fraud!" he said to himself, "the old windbag! It's the same speech I heard him make—let's see—nine, ten years ago. Yes, ten years ago. . . . It was Fourth of July, and Josie read the Declaration of Independence." Ten years, he reflected—gone like the brief flashing spin of a pinwheel, swift as the blink of an eye. Slowly the day, ten years gone, reshaped itself in his mind and drew with it its mesh of memories.

The children's voices sang shrill and clear: "*When Freedom from her mountain height unfurled her standard to the air, she tore the azure robe of night, and set the stars of glory there—and set the stars of . . .*"

Ten years, John Cantrell thought, like a pleasant green valley on the road. Yes, they had been good years, kind years—a man could count over his blessings in that span of time. It was not the money in the Bank, nor the strength of the Bank that he and Harvey had so carefully, yet boldly nourished—no, it was not the money, it was not the strength. No, he reflected, looking out over the dark mass of the crowd, its cigarettes winking in the dark, it was the peace of the years, the long quiet after the brief fierce storm that had shaken them all and whirled Will away from them even before they could understand what was happening. And clear as solid statuary under a bright light, there flashed into his mind the memory of Will crumpled on the floor, Harvey standing over him, the depositors still holding out their little books, Archer with the pistol dangling from his big hand, and young Seymour the cashier, his mouth open, drooling a little with excitement, while he himself knelt by Will and felt the frail bone of his arm through the smooth blue serge. A pity, a terrible pity that Will had not been strong enough to ride out the storm with them, the whirlwind that had sucked them all into its vortex and then thrown them out again, miraculously, except for Will, saved.

And yet, he mused, hearing as from a distance the shrill voices of the children singing like crickets in the heavy summer night, if Will had not been taken, they would all of them have been ruined, disgraced forever in the sight of the city. Will's death had had its purpose and its good—it had been like a sacrifice made for the good name of the Cantrells and the good of the people frantic with fear for their money in the Cantrells' bank. No, his ending had not been the foolish mischance that death sometimes is—it had been the strong link that had drawn the family, the depositors, back from the brink on that terrifying day when the Bank had tottered, poised to crash, balanced between its own life and death. And it was strange

that Will who had been the weakest link should by his death have become the strongest. And whether it was because of Will's death, as he thought, or a quick recovery from panic, when the Bank opened next day, the run was over. Its business went on in its old dignified way, and there was an end of the corroding fear and shame that had eaten into him.

Maybe now, he mused, maybe now Will knew that it had turned out all right—he deserved to know since he had died in doubt and anguish on the cold marble floor. Maybe he's listened to the humming of the turbines out at the river, maybe he's seen the march of the poles and their power lines into the city and across the countryside, maybe he's watched the hundreds of men bringing home milk and bread and meat because of those lines, maybe he's looked over Harvey's shoulder or mine and seen the proud statements of the Bank and maybe he's watched the city getting strong. Surely he's forgiven Harvey and me for what we forced him to, if there's anything to forgive. For if he sees, he knows that the city—yes, the whole country, has been striding forward, gathering its strength and force and becoming the first nation of the world, a nation full of a wish to grow still greater, anxious to make for every man a place of comfort and a time of ease. And Harvey and I—all we wanted was to do our share. And we have. We are. Surely he's forgiven us, if we need forgiving, he thought, suddenly aware again of the blare of the band and overhead the slow veiled movement of the moon.

He saw Francis at the railing, and then Francis was saying his name and all the faces on the platform were turned towards him. Dazedly, as he rose to his feet and came forward, he searched his mind for sentences. But when he was standing beside the little table and looking out across the railing, he felt composed. He stood silent for a moment, looking out across the crowd, feeling its restless life beating steadily in the night, sensing the slow pulsing movement of its many-limbed body, drawing again from its deep rich force, from the firmness of its faith in the meaning and direction of its life, the strength and force of his own faith. "Fellow-

citizens," he said slowly, "I am sorry that these young men must go off into the danger of war, and yet I am proud that they are going because they are going to fight for the faith that America has taught them both by word and by deed. It would be a poor creed if men would not fight for it." He paused, waiting for his next sentences to form themselves in his mind before he spoke them.

In the pause Amby turned to Al Schaeffer sitting beside him on the grass and asked: "Did you tell them yet?"

Al replied: "No, Amby—not yet. Honest to God, I haven't got the heart."

"You have to tell them tonight. My old lady's been carryin' on all day since I told her this morning. But I made up my mind to it, and I'm goin' through. Maybe," he said in a lower voice, "maybe if my old man was still alive, it would be different. I wouldn't be so anxious to get away, but I been half dead myself since he died. Maybe the army'll wake me up." His glance touched Al's and darted away.

"Yeah, I know," Al said. "But I'm afraid—not for myself, Amby,—but for the old man. It'll kill him if I enlist. That's what I'm afraid of." He eased his bulky body on the turf, and looked around calmly at the people near by who were saying "Sh!" to him and Amby.

"You gotta go through," Amby said. "You promised."

"Okay," Al said, "I'll tell him tonight. No matter what, I'll tell him tonight. . . ."

". . . a faith so strong," John Cantrell said, "that they are willing to fight for it even on a foreign soil, a faith made from their freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of worship, freedom of opportunity."

"Freedom to die in the trenches like rats in a hole!" Marius said. "Lies! Lies! How can a man speak such lies?"

Behind him some people muttered, a voice said: "He's a German, I tell you!" and Emily in fear seized and shook her husband's arm. "Will you be quiet!" she said. "D'you want to be mobbed?" Why doesn't Albert come, she thought, turning her head in the darkness,

why doesn't he come? Beside her Marius mumbled something under his breath, but when she leaned to speak to him, she saw his eyes fixed and glowing, and she kept silent.

" . . . in the words of Emerson," John Cantrell said slowly, "some verses which sum up my meaning:

'United States! the ages plead,—
Present and Past in under-song,—
Go put your creed into your deed,
Nor speak with double tongue.' "

He waited a little and then went on: "It may seem to you that I have wandered far from the purpose of our meeting here tonight, but I haven't. No creed has any meaning unless we are willing to put it to the test of the deed, are willing to fight for it."

The old bugger! thought Jack Smith, he's still alive and still going strong. He was sitting on the grass at the base of the slope that led up to the baseball diamond, listening surreptitiously to the conversation of the two men in front of him. One was a nigger, with a close-cropped head set on wide solid shoulders, and he was aiming to talk to him as soon as he got the chance because as soon as he laid eyes on him, he had seen right off that the nigger had the makings of a good pug.

When the two men stopped talking for a while, he had listened to the speaker from the bandstand and recognized him as the old fart of a soldier he had carried on the trolleys when he had been a conductor ten years ago in this jerk of a city. He had followed the crowd to the park because when he looked in on the Turk's place, he had seen Lily busy waiting on a big crowd, and decided he'd try to see her later. "Will she be surprised, Smitty boy, when you walk in on her? After ten years! I wonder will she know you right off!"

As the train had hit the hills on the outside of town, he had looked eagerly out of the window at the dark countryside with the moonlight falling in wide bands across it, but nothing looked familiar to him. From the trestle on the river, he had seen a glow in the sky, and asked the conductor about it.

"It's the power-plant," the conductor told him.

"Oh, yeah," he had remembered. The lousy-rich Cantrells had just begun to build it when he blew out of town ten years ago. Ten years, he thought—thirty-six years old! "Jes's, you gotta do some-thin' with yourself, Smitty kid . . . maybe you ought to enlist." A fine sucker he would be if he did, with the break he had in being over the draft age. But he was in pretty bad shape anyway, the army never'd take him. Maybe he had ought to work out with the boys at the gym. After all, a fight manager ought to keep in condition so as to set his pugs a good example. But first he had to get hold of a winner quick and get back in the dough, the easy dough.

"You gotta be a wise guy, Smitty. You gotta play this Lily baby right to get yourself a stake." He was nearly flat broke, but it was lucky he was wearing this snappy new suit when he had to make the quick break just because he had fixed a stinking fight. The dicks in Philly could look for him till they dropped, but they would never pick him up in this burg. Wait till he told Lily that he had bought the suit right on the Great White Way in New York. Her eyes would be bugging right out of her head.

The old bugger on the platform was still blowing off. These dried-up old punks sure loved the sound of their own voice.

". . . patriotism can be bought cheap with words," John Cantrell said strongly into the night, "but dear with action."

In front of Smitty, the two men, the white boy and the nigger, began to talk again, and he leaned forward cautiously to listen.

"I was out to the old man's farm t'day," Joe Cascione said. "First time in more'n a year."

"How they doin'?" Indie asked him.

"Say, they're doin' swell," Joe said. "You'd be surprised. I'll take you out some day, you can see yourself. . . . My sister, Elena, you remember her?"

Indie shook his head.

"Anyway, she nagged them and nagged them till they let her fix the house up swell. And they have to sweat plenty for their dough,

too. The house was a dump last time I seen it—fallin' to pieces. It was an old farmhouse they bought when the power-plant was buildin', and they moved it right down the river on a flatboat. I remember they looked like they was goin' to fight the Indians." He laughed. "If you'd been around t'day, I'd of taken you out with me. I looked for you down to the pool parlor, but Chick told me he ain't seen you in a long time."

"I ain't been around much lately," Indie said.

"What're you doin'?—keepin' a dame or somethin'?"

"We been pretty busy down at the yard," Indie said. "Mr. Bandler's kept me on the jump."

"Why don't you quit workin' for that Jew junk peddler an' get yourself a good job? Like me."

"Yeah—an' get myself blown to pieces the way that poor girl got it a while ago? Oh, sure."

"Never mind," Joe said, "you oughta see the dough we're pullin' down—double time for overtime. All the Polacks and Hunkies from the Flats are wearin' silk shirts. And believe me, kid, I'm out to get all I c'n before the draft gets me. Jes's, I wish I was gettin' even a little cut of what the Cantrells are makin' outa munitions. B'lieve me, that Harvey Cantrell is some smart weasel. . . . With the start he had, I'd be makin' thousan's an' thousan's today, too."

"Mr. Bandler's pilin' it up, too," said Indie. "The war's sent scrap way up. Don't you worry about him bein' a peddler. He's doin' big business now—got five trucks workin' for him every minute."

"Reminds me," Joe said, "what d'you hear from Dave—anything?"

"I got a card from him a coupla weeks ago," Indie told him. "He's in a doctor's college now, y'know."

"Gee, the old gang is sure busted up," Joe said. "Remember the fun we useta have when we were kids? Boy, them was the days. . . ."

"You said it, Joe."

They stopped talking, and listened again to John Cantrell, his

figure distant, but clear in the glare of the lights.

" . . . easy for me to talk, easy, of course, for all us older people to talk in this way. But for our faith to live, to have meaning, those who are young and strong enough to fight must go to fight for all of us—"

Then a voice close behind them was saying: "Hey, nigger, you got a match?"

Without turning his head, Indie said evenly: "You call me 'nigger' again, I'll bust your head open, Mister."

"Ah, don't get sore," Jack said, "I didn't mean nothin' by it. . . . I useta live in this burg once, and I'm thinkin' of makin' a business connection here again. I'm a fight-manager," he added weightily, "and I—"

Joe turned. "Well, go ahead an' manage—manage your own Goddam business."

"I didn't mean nothin', boys," Smitty said placatingly. "I was just sittin' here listenin' to that old fart up there blowin' off when I seen the set of your friend's shoulders—I never seen such a spread—and it bein' my business, I got to figurin' maybe he could be another Sam Langford or Jack Johnson. They make great fighters—" he hesitated, and then said carefully: "Colored people, I mean."

"Yeah, but is there any real dough in it?" Joe asked.

"Is there! Big dough, easy dough. Take it from me, boys. A guy that can use his dukes right, a guy that's got a little flash—you know, puts on a good show—c'n make himself a forchune. In no time—a forchune. That's if he's got a good manager. Say," he went on, "do you guys have to stay here? Howsa about lettin' me set up the beers or somethin'?"

"Now you're talkin'," Joe said.

The strains of the band music and the singing voices of the children came floating to them over the heads of the dark crowd.

"Okay then," Smitty said. "Let's blow before the crowd starts."

John Cantrell sat down. The sultriness of the night, the effort of his speech had tired him. He wondered how soon after the meeting was over Francis would be able to get the car through the crowd

to take him to Harvey's Liberty Loan party.

He peered down into the darkness where the soldiers were talking in low voices. What are they thinking? he wondered. And he tried to remember how he had felt the night before he left for the war. But all he could remember were things outside him, not inside. It had been a thundery night, and the rain had come sweeping in off the hills while he and the rest of the volunteers waited for the train to puff in. It had come three hours late, and the men had to be roused from their sleep on the station floor. He remembered the freshness of the rain-washed air flowing in through the suddenly-opened doors, the sulphurous stink of the soft-coal smoke from the engine mingling with the rank vapors of the turned-down lamps and the steamy damp smell of the men's greatcoats—vividly the memory came to him, and with it the recollection of Captain Byrnes's voice, shouting down into the haze of his sleep: "Up with ye, ye mummies—there's a train to take ye to the wars!" At the last minute, going up the steps of the coach, he had looked back, suddenly hungry for a sight of the town, but the mist was too thick. And with the lift of his foot from the ground into the coach, he had gone from his youth into his manhood. He wondered how many of the boys sitting there in front of him would return to complete the years of their manhood. "Ah, I was lucky," he murmured to himself.

Again there swept over him the feeling he knew so well since he had begun writing his history of the city, the feeling that try as he might he would never be able to bring alive the crumbled dust, the fleeting twist and turn of time in the days when he was a soldier going to war. After Will's death he had not done much with his writing. So strongly had he been drawn into the forward thrust of the Bank, he and Harvey straining side by side, that he had been content to let the history go for a time. And when, after a couple of years, he had begun turning his notes and his papers over again, young Tommy had come to Josie and Francis and the delight in his grandson had once more turned him from his brooding on the past.

And then after the pressure of his work with Harvey eased and

he thought of his writing again, he began to miss Marius. He had hoped that Tommy's coming would somehow bring him and Marius together again, and he waited a long time for a note, a word. But none came, and he fretted at Marius for being a stubborn old fool. Finally he himself made the overture of renewed friendship impulsively one day when he bumped into his old friend in front of the Bank. But Marius had been so curt and stiff that he had made no effort to talk to him again, and Marius had never since acknowledged his existence, passing him when they met on the street with a stony and unseeing eye.

Nevertheless he missed Marius, still missed him. He missed the long slow search of their arguments, the fierce exciting rub of their minds against each other, the pleasant quiet-filled pauses, the feeling that he and Marius had shared a common portion of time together in the life of the city. A man would say that nothing could break up a friendship that had lasted more than thirty years. But it had been broken and he knew why. It was not alone their quarrel about the building of the power-plant and the hot words they had flung at each other. No, it was also the deep wound to Marius's stiff pride, for Marius would not have forgotten, perhaps could never forget, what a fiasco his campaign against Francis Connell had been. Harvey had been right when he said that people would come only out of curiosity and would jeer before they left.

He himself had gone to hear Marius's first and last campaign speech in the Fletcher Block before a pitifully small crowd huddled up in the front rows of the musty hall. Marius, earnest and red-faced, his bulky body fixed as if rooted in the platform, his stiff gestures, his voice sometimes too loud, sometimes too low, had made a confused speech about the corruption of capitalists and politicians like the Cantrells and Francis Connell, trying to prove that they had stolen the power-plant from the people of Persepolis. For all of Marius's sincerity, John had decided as he listened, it was a poor speech because it didn't make sense to the people who were listening—didn't make sense because they had all read in the *Chronicle* of how many men had been given work at the construction,

and how much cheaper power and light were going to be for people in the town.

So no one applauded when Marius paused, but as he went on, his words becoming more and more incoherent, his arguments more and more involved, an occasional catcall went up. And after a while he was trying to talk against an almost steady hooting and jeering so that finally he had stopped abruptly. He had stepped closer to the edge of the platform and said in a low strained voice: "Fools—you fools! Christ himself could not teach you!" At which such a confused howling and booing went up that he had shouted: "You were sent here to do this to me!" A shower of rotten vegetables, obviously hoarded for the end of his speech, had followed this statement, and then patrolman Mike Sheehan had gone up onto the platform and after a moment's low talk with him, Marius had walked off, followed by the undiminished jeers of the crowd. But Marius's guess that some of them had been sent to pelt him was a good one.

John had found out a long time afterwards, and it had hurt him even then to know it, that Francis and Harvey had taken no chances, and that a good portion of the crowd had been composed of some of Francis's adherents from the Flats, people who were indebted to Francis for a ton of coal in the winter, or for his getting someone in the family a job with the city, or for getting some lad out of a police scrape, people to whom his name meant a good deal more than the name of Eugene Debs, or even, for that matter, Teddy Roosevelt. "I told you so," Harvey had said, grinning a little, when John told him what had happened in the hall. But stubborn Marius had not given up. He had run for Councilman just the same on his own Independent Socialist ticket and had been so badly beaten—he had got seven votes—that, according to Francis, the standard joke around City Hall for a long time had been: "Gentlemen, me and my seven constituents . . . !"

Now, looking about him into the night and hearing the dark mass of the crowd stirring with its restless life, he wondered if Marius were somewhere in it. The band played again, and when

it had finished, a tall thin girl from the high school, a senior named Jennie Mundy stood stiffly under the lights and recited a little breathlessly: "In Flanders fields the poppies grow between the crosses row on row . . ." and the murmuring of the crowd sank low till it seemed to be part of the dark mass of the earth itself murmuring in its flight through time. "Ah, well," the old man said vaguely to himself, "that's the way of it," murmuring over his memories of Marius and himself and the long talks over the beer glasses. What you took with your right hand, you paid for with your left—yes, you paid, he mused, thinking of the scarred wrinkled stump of his left arm, and wondering again how much the boys in the uniforms sitting so quietly down there below him would have to pay for what the country had given them in the way of their pleasures, their friendships, their jobs, their freedom. Words, words!—they were nothing, he brooded, it was action, deeds, that counted. You had to pay with a dearer coin than lip-service. . . . Only when he had tried to make his creed into the deed had Marius and he realized how deep their disagreement went, realized that they were really not friends but enemies—enemies for thirty years, and they had not known it because they had talked and laughed and drunk and gone to baseball-games together, because they had done what people who are friends always do. No, he thought sadly, we can never be friends again because we were never really friends to begin with. Friendship is identity. His look wandered into the night, and he sat bemused and saddened. But a little later he thought: all this is nonsense. We always respected each other, understood each other. Respect and understanding make identity, too.

He started. Francis Connell was shaking him gently by the shoulder and smiling down at him. "You've been sleeping!" Francis said.

"No, no, Francis. Just thinking. . . ."

"Well, it's all over. They're all going."

John, looking around, saw the soldiers in the band filing down the stairs at the back of the stand and sensed the vast heave of the crowd pulling itself up from the ground and spreading itself into

the streets and flowing into the houses on the streets.

"You don't want to sleep in the bandstand, do you?" Francis said.

John stood up, and then, startled at a clatter behind them, wheeled around. A bulky body heaved itself over the railing and ran to the front of the platform where it stood directly beneath the glaring lights. "Who?—what—?" Francis stammered, but John, somehow not surprised, said: "It's Marius!"

Marius Schaeffer blinked against the glare of the lights. He could not see the faces of the people he had leaped to warn. But he knew they were there, could hear the murmuring, the breathing of their multicellular life flowing away from him into the iron traps their trainers and masters had set for them. Below him at the edge of the platform, Emily, who had somehow managed to struggle after him in his excited push through the crowd, was saying over and over: "Marius, are you crazy? Come home. . . . Marius!" But the red words of his anger flared in his mind, and he let them burst from his mouth.

"Friends!" he shouted at the top of his voice, "friends!"

The people turned and looked back at the figure with its upflung arms silhouetted against the lights. "What'd he say?" they asked one another, peering into one another's faces, "what'd he say, I thought it was all over, what's he sayin'?" stopping with their heads turned back over their shoulders, staring at the black figure gesticulating under the lights.

"Lies! Lies! All lies!" Marius roared. "Why do you listen to such lies? Listen to me, I beg you—listen and I will tell you the truth. They are trying to fool you with their fine talk of faith, honor, glory, freedom—you will have to pay for their words with your blood, your limbs, your life!" He took a deep gasping breath. Below him at the edge of the platform his frightened wife groped to touch his feet with her hands.

Francis exclaimed: "He's gone crazy!—we'll have to grab him."

"Don't hurt him, Francis," John said. He felt a current of anguish for his old friend go needle-sharp through him. "Francis, don't. . . ."

Lieutenant Kelly recovered from his slack-jawed surprise. He turned to Mike Sheehan and Ed Smalley. "C'mon!" he said. "Let's get him off there!"

"You have been betrayed!" Marius roared. "Where is the promise he made to keep you out of war? President Wilson is a liar, President Wilson is a thief of your blood, your lives . . . !"

The people turned and stared into one another's faces, asking: "What'd he say? Is somethin' wrong? Is somethin' the matter? What's he sayin'?"

At the edge of the platform, Emily sobbed: "Marius—Marius! Before they hurt you. . . ."

Then Francis was tugging excitedly at Marius's arm, saying: "Schaeffer, stop! Before you get into trouble—" and Marius was trying to shake him off.

The policemen clattered onto the platform, and Ed Smalley got a grip on Marius's collar, turning him half-about towards the others. The group struggled for a moment, twisting back and forth, and the people peered into one another's moon-pale faces, and asked: "Whatsa matter? Is somethin' wrong? What'd he say?"

Marius wrenched away from the police and stumbled back. His foot caught in the light-cable, and tore heavily at it to get free. The arc lights went out, but in the pale glimmer of the bulbs above the musicians' stands John Cantrell saw a dark arm grasping a club come down swiftly. Then the cluster broke apart, and he heard someone say: "That's the ticket, Smalley. Call the wagon."

John leaped up, hearing Emily Schaeffer's incoherent words at his feet, and seized Francis's arm. "Godalmighty, Francis," he said breathlessly, "don't let them arrest him. You hear me, Francis?"

Francis, straightening his ripped coat, hesitated, panting. Then he nodded and turned to Kelly. "Listen," he said, "I'll be responsible for him."

Kelly looked doubtful. "I oughta take him in, Councilman."

"I think it'll be better all around to let the whole thing blow over," Francis told him brusquely, and the lieutenant said quickly: "I get it, Councilman."

"The car's parked in back, isn't it, Francis?" John asked. "Let's get him into it right away. . . . Is he hurt bad?"

As they lifted Marius, groaning, from the floor, the old man leaned over the railing and spoke down into the darkness. "Emily? You there? . . . It's John Cantrell. Get into my car around back. You'll find Josie there."

He heard her hoarse whisper, "Thank God, it's you, John. . . . Is he all right?"

"Yes, yes," he told her impatiently. "Get around back before the crowd gets here."

The car moved slowly through the crowd towards Hamblin Street while Emily fought to keep her tears back at the sight of the ugly bruise on Marius's forehead. "You'll stop at Doctor Hinckley's, John?" she murmured, and the people, craning their necks at the car and staring hungrily, asked one another: "What happened? Was someone hurt? Is there somethin' wrong? Tell me. Tell me. I wanna know. . . ."

Jack Smith and the two with him stepped back as the car shot by them. As the trolleys began to rattle down Hamblin Street, he said: "Boy, I'm beginnin' to remember now. I'm gettin' the feel of this burg again. Of course, it ain't New York, or even Philly, but it's okay. For a visit, I mean." He laughed.

"Oh, yeah?" Joe said. "Well, it's good enough for us. If you don't like it, shove it."

"Jes's, what're you so touchy about?"

"F'get it," Joe said. "How about the beer you were talkin' about? I'll take rye for mine."

"Sure," Smitty said. "An' you better have it quick because pretty soon there ain't gonna be any more whiskey, an' you'll be singin' 'How Dry I Am,' all day long and suckin' pink soda through a straw."

"Bull," Joe said, "that's a lotta bull. Nobody's ever gonna take my liquor away from me. . . . It's against the Constitution."

They stopped at McSoley's Bar on Sheridan Street and had a few drinks. Then Indie said he had to be going. Smitty laid a hand

on his arm. "Listen, big boy," he said, "don't f'get I'm comin' to see you tomorra. I got a big proposition for you. There's plenty of dough in it, b'lieve me."

Indie nodded and went out.

"He's a hot one, ain't he?" Smitty said in a confidential tone to Joe.

"Yeah? Whaddya mean?"

"Well, all the niggers I ever knew was happy, laughin' all the time, y'know what I mean—nothin' ever fazes 'em. . . . But don't get me wrong," Jack said hastily. "I like this guy. What a build on him!—I could do plenty for him, b'lieve me, if he would let me handle 'im."

"Is there any money in it?"

"He'd be rollin' in it! Just rollin' in it."

"Then you can talk to him," Joe said. "Because if it's money, Indie'll listen." He began to laugh, feeling the pleasant warm weight of the whiskey in his belly. "He's savin' up to buy an island."

"A 'nislant'? Whaddya mean, a 'nislant'?"

"Never mind," Joe said. "Jus' show him how to make the dough, that's all. Jus' show him the dough."

They had several more drinks, and at length, Smitty got up and opened his face in a wide yawn. "I gotta beat it," he said, and winked. "Get it?"

"I'm wise, bud. A dame, huh?" Joe said. "You must be a fast worker—get to town and you got one waitin' for you right off."

"This is just an' ol' tootsie of mine, but I didn't waste any time."

"Does she—?" Joe asked him.

"I'll say she does," Smitty said loudly. "We're like a coupla rabbits." A little unsteadily he made for the door.

"Who's your loud-mouthed friend, Joe?" Hickey, the bartender, asked him.

"A smart guy from New York." Joe lifted his glass. "He says there ain't gonna be any more of this stuff soon. Says the gover'ment's gonna close up all these grogshops."

"More of that New York bull," Hickey said. "I never seen one, but he was full of it. Up to his ears."

Joe laughed. "Ah' over his head, Hickey, ol' kid, over his head."

"On the house," Hickey said, shoving the bottle towards him.

WHEN Indie came into the house, the springs of his mother's bed creaked, and she called out: "That you, Frankie boy?"

"Uh-huh," he said, running the water in the sink and drinking deeply from the glass to get the rank taste of the whiskey out of his mouth.

"Dja have a good time up to the park?"

"So-so," he said. "I met Joe Cascione. There was a feller picked up with us, by the name of Smith. Said he'd die if we didn't let him buy us a coupla drinks."

"I thought you hated the stuff," she said.

"I had on'y one," he told her. He opened the door of the ice-box. "That ham sure looks good."

"They's plenty, Frankie boy," she said. "Eat all you want. . . . What you say this person you met up with wan'ed of you an' Joe?"

"I didn't say," he replied. He was cutting chunks from the ham with the kitchen-knife and eating them off the point. "He wants me to be a fighter," he said. "A box-fighter."

"I hope you boxed his ears off!"

"Nope," Indie said, "I'm thinkin' it over." He flexed his muscles, feeling them tighten like spring-steel across his shoulders. "Says I gotta build like Jack Johnson."

"Don't you pay no 'tention to him, Frankie," she said shrilly. "Don't you listen to 'im. Why should you wanna git all banged up, fightin' in the prize ring?"

"Money," Indie said. "Money."

"I never knew a man to be so money-hungry," she said. "It ain't natcheral. You ain't got no friends, you don't care fo' the gals, nor the booze—all you want is money. . . . I swear sometimes I think you is more that Jew's boy than you is mine."

"Never mind about me," he said.

There was a pause between them. He wiped the knife and put the ham back in the icebox.

Then he heard her say in a low voice: "Yo' father was around again t'day."

Indie tensed, and his fingers curled around the knife-handle. "You let him in?" he asked. "You gimme the right answer now."

"No," she said. "He begged me, but I wouldn't open the door."

"What'd he want?" Indie asked.

"What you think? Money," she told him.

"You give him any?"

"No," she said, but her voice quavered, and Indie said quickly: "You lyin' to me, Ma. You did give him."

"On'y a dollar," she said. "I pushed it under the door."

"I told you before never to give him money," he said harshly. "Let him die like a dog."

"He said he was hungry, said he was sick," his mother replied. She began to cry. "Why is you' heart so hard, Frankie? He's you' father, ain't he? He's my husban', ain't he?"

"I hate him," Indie said, and drew his muscles taut. "I hate him, and I'll cut his heart out if I ever find him here." He took a step towards her door. "'Course if the draft gits me, he'll come a-run-nin' to drink up your money and beat you senseless. But if I ever find him here—I warn you, Ma!" His mother was quiet, and he said challengingly: "Well?"

In a low voice his mother said: "'Tain't natcheral fo' a woman to live apart from her husban'."

"Don't you talk that way to me!" Indie said thickly. "That's gutter-talk, you hear me? You go to him if you want to, but don't you talk dirty here to me!" He made a wild and menacing gesture towards her doorway, and then went into his own room, slamming the door violently behind him.

"I'M OBLIGED to you, John," Emily Schaeffer said. "I can't tell you how much."

"It's all right, Emily," he told her. "Let's be thankful that that patriotic policeman didn't catch him square."

Over her shoulder he saw Marius sitting on the sofa in the parlor, sipping the hot milk that Emily had prepared for him, and touching with a wary hand the bandages that Doctor Hinckley had put on a little while ago. He and Marius had not had much to say while Emily was out. They had talked a little bit about Marius's business when John, embarrassed by the silence, had hesitantly inquired how things were going. Marius had answered weakly that business was pretty good and that he was thinking of putting in a new storefront because Albert and Mrs. Mundy had been after him for so long about it. Then John had asked for Albert, saying that he had seen him last week out at the ball-game. "I knew him from the back, Marius," he had said, falling more easily into the old bantering talk of years ago; "he's shaped like you, the same width all the way down nearly. From the rear you'd look like twins."

Marius had smiled weakly, and rested his head on his hand.

"Ache, does it?" John asked, and Marius had replied as Emily came in: "Like fury."

Now as he stepped out on the porch with Emily, seeing beneath the street lamp the figures of Francis and Josie patiently waiting in the car, she laid her hand on his arm and drew the door to behind her. "I wish, John," she said, "that you and Marius would pick up again somehow. Two old cronies like you—why, it's childish that you should have let these ten years go by without becoming friends again."

"But I tried, Emily," he said earnestly. "Don't you think I've missed him?"

She sighed. "Since his father died, he hasn't been the same. He was glad to get your note of condolence, but he wouldn't send you more than a line of thanks."

"Yes, I know," John said, remembering his disappointment at the curtness of Marius's reply.

"So he's really had no one to talk to. Of course, he's gone down to that Debs Club a lot, but he just doesn't seem to get satisfaction

from it." She smiled a little. "Maybe because they all agree with him, I guess. And he and Albert haven't been hitting it off since Albert grew up. Albert's full of energy, he's got ideas about the business, he's young and wants to see things move and grow, and that Mrs. Mundy who works there is a regular dynamo—between them they've been deviling Marius." She shrugged tiredly. "But he's stubborn—I think sometimes he doesn't want any more money than what'll pay for a crust of bread and a strip of salt pork."

John smiled at her, and she nodded briskly at him.

"It's true," she said. "What's made it worse is that Albert won't see things his way about the War and everything else. And he just can't bear to have Albert disagree with him. I can see how it hurts him when Albert crosses him in one of their arguments. And Albert tries—he tries to see things his father's way, but his feelings are all different. Altogether different," she repeated. "And since the War started, Marius has taken things so hard. He talks all the time about the millions killed and wounded. The only time I've seen him really laugh in the past few years was about Henry Ford's Peace Ship and even that got stale for him mighty soon. And when we declared war—I don't have to tell you how he carried on, John. You know him."

"Yes, I know," he said, understanding the strain that had made Marius leap to a public platform and shout his grief and his hurt at the unhearing, uncomprehending crowd, with its mind geared to a different way of belief. He might just as well have talked Chinese and made as much sense to them, he thought.

"Before the war," Emily went on, "he didn't take things so hard. He's changed, he's aged, and—" she lowered her voice and looked quickly around to make sure that the door behind her was shut—"I'm worried, terribly worried, more than I can say. I'm afraid. Afraid that he'll get melancholy—and, don't laugh at me, John—afraid he might go off his head."

"Ah, no, Emily!" he exclaimed, suddenly aware of her rigidly controlled fear, "you're imagining things!"

"You don't know," she told him. "Sometimes he acts so funny,

mumbling to himself, pacing back and forth, that I could scream with fear."

John took her hand, startled by its coldness. He said: "I'll try to do something, Emily—I will, I promise. . . . Now that I've been here in your house again, maybe he won't mind my coming in again. He can't throw me out if I come to inquire for his health, can he, now?" He laughed softly. "You make me feel like a desperate Desmond."

"It's done me good to talk to you, John," she said, "and I hold you to your promise. You will come, won't you?"

"Trust me, Emily. I'll come if I have to break down your front door."

"That's good, that's fine," she said.

"What're you two whispering about?" a voice asked from the foot of the porch stairs.

Emily started, and then said: "Albert, you scared me, creeping up on us like a red Indian."

"Sorry, Ma," he said, "I thought you saw me coming up the walk. . . . H'lo, Mr. Cantrell."

John greeted him, and went on: "Godalmighty, Albert, you're a giant! I remember when you were nothing but a towheaded little squirt, fighting on the streets."

"He's head and shoulders over me, the big lout," Emily said.

"What were you whispering about anyway?" Al asked. "You trying to sell Liberty Bonds from door to door, Mr. Cantrell?"

"Don't be fresh, Albert," his mother said. "Your father's been hurt," she went on.

"How? what . . . ?"

She told him quickly what had happened at the park.

"Gee!" he said, "it's a wonder he wasn't lynched! . . . I remember now people were looking back and there was a commotion, but I didn't think anything of it. Is he awake, Ma? Can I see him?" His look was grave and troubled.

"Don't worry," Emily said, "he's all right. That hulk of a policeman missed his aim luckily."

"I have to run, folks," John told them. "I'm sorry. I'm expected over at Harvey Cantrell's."

He said good-night to Albert, and Emily, walking him down to the gate, asked: "You won't forget, will you, John?"

"No, Emily, I won't," he said. "I promise I won't."

When she went back into the house, Albert was sitting on the sofa beside his father.

"No talk now!" she said. "You're going right to bed, Marius. . . . You want some more hot milk?"

He shook his head at her.

She was frightened by his pallor. "Albert'll give you a hand upstairs."

"Sure thing," said Al, but he made no move to rise, nor take his father's arm that was stretched out for him. "But there's something I have to tell you about first."

"Don't be foolish," Emily said impatiently, "not now. Can't you see your father's waiting?"

"It's important, it can't wait," Al said. They stared at him, and suddenly he blurted out: "I'm enlisting tomorrow."

His father sat, with his hand stiffly outstretched, stricken still, but his mother exclaimed: "You what?"

"I'm enlisting—me and Amby Tait're going down together early in the morning." His father made a low growling noise in his throat, and Albert, seeing the rage and pain in his eyes, said: "I can't help it, Pa. I have to."

"You have to?" Marius said. "You have to be a murderer of other men, you have to let yourself be carried away like a child by pretty fairy tales, you have to march behind a painted cloth and sing sweet songs about guns and bombs—you have to?"

He panted, and Al replied, while his mother tried vainly to hush him: "That's not why, Pa—I swear that's not why."

His father tried to speak, but Al rushed on: "I know what you think, Pa. I respect what you think, but I just can't feel that way about things. There's been something stronger than you teaching me. . . . Yes, I wanted to learn from you. Didn't I always listen

to you, to Grandfather, didn't I?" He felt like a boy again, pitting himself against the solid mature force of his father's strength of mind and will, but he said again: "Something stronger than you. Walking through the streets of this city, I felt its life running through me. Not just today's life, but all the life that's past still rushing into me and through me, lifting me up and carrying me along so that I couldn't say 'No' to it. Tonight when I looked at the Civil War statue in Sheridan Park, I felt it was me standing there, holding the gun that had fought for the country."

Emily Schaeffer looked at her son in amazement—she had never heard him speak so before, and she thought suddenly: "He's my boy now." In frightened, pitying love she listened to him.

Al faltered, but his father, his eyes invisible in his downbent head resting upon his hand, did not move, did not reply. Al said: "Pa, I fought it all out with myself night after night walking in the old streets. I don't want to be a murderer, I don't want to hurt anyone, but I would not want—" he hesitated and added in a lower voice—"I would not want America to be hurt either. If the country needs me, then I'm going. . . . I'm not going to wait to be dragged out by the draft. Nothing could drag me into going, and nothing can keep me from going. . . . I'm twenty-four. I know my own mind, and I—" he twisted his big hands together and stared at his father's bent head. He turned to his mother. "I don't know what else I can say, Ma. It was hard enough to say what I have."

She put her fingers to her lips, and went to Marius. She touched his shoulder, and he raised his head. He looked past her, his face pale and drawn, his eyes glaring at his son, and said: "I cannot hold you back, Albert, but I tell you this: if you go out of this house to become a hired murderer, I hope you never come back to it."

Emily laughed nervously. "Why, Marius, you sound like a play, an old-fashioned play. You're joking, of course."

"Joking?" he said, "joking?" and putting his hand to his head, fell forward slowly across the table, his face hitting its surface with a little bump.

Albert jumped up and ran towards him. "He's fainted!"

"Get some ammonia, Albert. Quickly!" Emily said. Her heart felt like ice.

They brought him to, but he was too weak to say anything. His eyes turned slowly with a terrible reproach upon them both as they lifted him from the chair and walked him slowly towards the stairs. He's broken with everyone, Emily thought, with his oldest friend and his only son. . . . With me too? she wondered, will he lose me too for his belief? while she panted on the stairs with the weight of his body between her and her son.

FATHER REGAN came in before Amby got home. Margaret Tait got him comfortably settled in the parlor with a plate of biscuits and a bottle of port at his elbow.

"Now, Margaret, what's all this fuss you're making?" he said. "There's no need for you to be hopping around like this for a mere priest."

"I know it," she said, "and if you wasn't here for somethin' special, you'd get no more than a bottle of beer."

His ruddy face broadened into a smile. "Isn't Ambrose home yet?" he asked. "Do you think a man as busy as I can wait for that long-legged linkabout of yours till midnight?" But he leaned back in the chair with the glass of sweet wine in his hand, and chatted easily with her while she fretted at Amby's being so late. She stopped in the middle of a sentence at the slamming of the front door, and then Amby, with the length of his father in his limbs but with his mother's quick look about the eyes, came in. He was swinging his tie and collar in his hand, and the corners of his shirt were tucked in to make a V at his throat.

"Is that how you walked through the streets?" his mother asked. "As if you were still a kid of fourteen instead of twenty-four? Twenty-four," she echoed herself, "where's the time run to?"

Amby said: "Oh, now, Ma." His eyes darted to the priest. "Hello, Father. She talks to me as if I was still fourteen. It's Ambrose this and Ambrose that till I don't know which way to turn."

"You've got the gift of troubling your mother, I know that,"

the priest told him. "Now, now, don't get huffy," he said, as Amby's face darkened. "You've guessed why I'm here, hey?"

"Yeah," Amby said. "Every time she can't manage me herself she brings the church in on me to polish me off."

"Ambrose, that's no talk to use to a priest!" his mother exclaimed.

"I'll talk to him man to man, if he's willin'," Amby said.

"You want me to take off my collar and take you out in the back yard and whip you in a finish-fight, Amby? I could do it," Father Regan said.

"Maybe you could, Father, but my quarrel's not with you. . . . Must a guy have a passport from the church for every move he makes?"

"Now, don't fly off the handle, Amby," Father Regan told him. "Let's hear your story first, and then we'll ask questions and find answers. . . . Now, Margaret, you wait."

Amby leaned forward on his chair. "It's this, Father. . . . Last week I told her—Ma, I mean—that I was goin' to enlist, and she's been after me ever since, carryin' on and carryin' on, and threatenin' me with a visit from you and from the bishop and God knows who else, to make me change my mind. . . . Well, my mind's made up, and with all respect to you, Father, you can't change it for me. And that's the whole story."

Father Regan nodded his head several times. He turned to Margaret Tait. "Well, and what's your side of it?"

Pointing a finger at her son and speaking with bitter humiliation, she said: "That boy—you hear the talk he hands out to a priest of the church? That boy was meant himself to be a priest. What sin there is in me that made my prayers not come true, I don't know—nor what sin in him, runnin' the streets at all hours of the night with a boy whose father is a socialist and a dirty atheist as well. But he's not a priest—he's not even a good son of the church. I could tell you things about him, Father,"—she had worked herself into a quivering rage—"that would make you ashamed to put foot in this house. Ask him about the dirty picture-cards I found in his pocket. Ask him about the stink of loose women that comes off his

clothes on a Saturday night when he's come home after bein' a sport down at the dance-hall. Ask him about the disrespect he's shown me, ask him why he's hardly been to church since my Mike died. Ask him," she commanded, "ask him before the fire of God strikes him down in his disobedience and ungodliness!" She glared at Amby, who glowered sullenly at her.

Father Regan said coldly—to her astonishment, to her he was speaking, and not to Amby: "What right have you got to confess for the boy? Let him throw his own sins up. He'll come to it in good time and soon enough for me. Is this why you brought me here—to shame him? Then you've used us both shamefully." His black eyes were icy. He got to his feet. "And I'll be going."

Margaret Tait ran frantically towards him. "No! please, Father! It was wrong of me, I know it. I'll hold my tongue—only you talk to him." She began to cry. "If my poor Mike were only alive now. . . ."

Amby looked at the priest and shrugged his shoulders. "It's all true, Father," he said.

The priest scowled. "This is no place to tell me. I'll have you at confession early tomorrow morning, and at mass afterwards. And for the sins you bring to me while I'm sitting in the box I'll make you sweat. But not here, Ambrose."

Margaret said: "I never meant—I did not bring you here to listen to my complaints of his doin's. But talk to him, I beg you, Father. Keep him from this idea of enlistin'. . . . He's the only boy I got. I won't have him a soldier, goin' off to be killed like a rat in those trenches. . . . Why has God done this to me?" Her voice ran off into a wail. But in a moment she got control of herself again, and said more calmly: "Excuse me, Father—I'm all right now. Amby, tell me you won't enlist."

Amby shook his head. "You'll never give up, will you, Ma? But just the same, I mean to enlist in the mornin' unless I die in the night."

"You deserve to!" his mother burst out.

"That's enough now," Father Regan said. He turned to Amby.

"What's your hurry, Amby?" he asked in an easy tone. "Why must you be rushing off to war?"

"Because I feel I want to, that's why," Amby said. His look slipped away from the priest's.

"It'd be a sorrier world than it is even, if men had no better reason for what they do than just wanting to," Father Regan said.

"The draft would get me anyway," Amby said sullenly. "So what's the use of my waitin'?"

"The Draft Board would be sure to exempt you," the priest said, "because you're your mother's sole support." He raised his voice a little, and his tone sharpened. "Have you no sense of duty to your mother, Amby, who brought you up and sacrificed for you and needs your help?"

"I got a duty to my country, too," Amby said in a low voice.

His mother rounded upon him. "What duty to your country? Do you mean for the hate it bears the Irish, for the mockery it bears the Church, for the pain and death it put your father to?" She slapped his face with all her strength, then looked at the priest, and ran sobbing from the room.

Amby put his hand up to his tingling cheek. He turned to the priest. "I'm sorry, Father, but I don't see any sense in goin' on with this."

From under his brows the priest looked at him. "You haven't told me the whole story, Ambrose," he said.

"Yes, I have, Father," Amby said. Awkwardly, he withstood the other's dark glance until the priest nodded and said:

"I'll be going then. . . . Good night, Ambrose."

"Good night," Amby said. He followed Father Regan to the door, and then went quickly to his room.

Standing in the dark, he whispered: "Pa, where are you?" and the memory, bitter and corroding, made him clench his jaws and stand unmoving while the whisper ran about the room. "Pa. . . ." he whispered again, and remembered his father as he had found him, stiff on the floor, lying on his side the way a dead dog lies in the street. "Heart failure," old Doc Magoon had said. "A failure,

Amby boy," his father had mumbled out of the stench of whiskey that hung over him when Amby and his mother had hauled him up the stairs the day before he died. Sure, he told himself, heart failure, seeing in the icy darkness of his mind the little bottle in his father's fingers and remembering their stiffness when he pried the bottle loose and read on it POISON—ARSENIC—POISON. "Pa!" he whispered, feeling as if he were falling in the darkness, like losing himself in the sickening darkness of the poolroom, the barroom, the whorehouse, while the memory of his father ate into his darkened heart. "Pa, where are you? . . . I should have gone with you, Pa. . . ." His lips made the words, but he did not utter them. Then after a moment he said aloud: "I hope I get killed in the trenches," and groping blindly towards the bed, flung himself heavily face downwards upon it.

THEY certainly fixed the place up, Smitty told himself. He was sitting at one of the small marble-topped tables with twisted wire legs at the back of Sakarian's Ideal Ice Cream and Candy Parlor. They must be rolling in dough, he thought. Paul, heavier than he was ten years ago, the vague wonder gone from his face, with a look of resolute content was busily scooping up ice cream and mixing sodas for the crowd that still lingered in the place on its way home from the park.

Lily, over whose figure Smitty's practised eye had run several times as she went back and forth serving the customers, looked just the same to him. Maybe she was a little plumper, but otherwise she was the same, the same small soft nose, the same big blue eyes, the same shining coils of yellow hair. Boy, is she gonna be surprised! he thought as she approached his table. He bent his head and when she asked him what he would have, did not answer, so that she had to bend over and repeat her question. Then he suddenly looked up at her and said: "Lily . . . remember me?"

She drew back a step and stared at him. Then her face lighted, and her eyes shone. "Jack! Jack Smith!" she said.

He was delighted at the look of pleased surprise on her face.

"Jes's, am I glad to see you again, Lily!"

She bent forward and whispered: "Don't try to talk now. . . . Gimme your order. I'll talk to you later. . . . He's crazy jealous."

When she went back to the counter and said: "Double banana split, Paul," he muttered to her: "Who is that?"

"How should I know?" she snapped. "Don't you start naggin' me now with your jealous talk, or I'll scream right here in front of all the customers." Silenced, he swiftly slit the bananas and put them in the long shallow dish. She watched his quick hairy hands and hated him. As she carried the mixture away, she saw a fresh crowd push through the door, and knew he would be busy for the next few minutes.

"Lily, baby, you're just as beautiful as ever," Jack said when she put the dish in front of him.

"You're still the same ol' kidder," she told him; "you haven't changed either. . . . Gee, I'm cert'nly glad to see you, Jack. You gonna be in town long?"

"I came home to see you, baby," he said, "just you. There ain't a dame in New York to compare with you!"

"You cert'nly look classy," she told him.

"There ain't a day gone by but I wasn't thinkin' of you, Lily. Even after that raw deal you gave me."

"Yeah, I know," she told him quickly, lowering her eyes. "They caught a feller in the park a coupla months later. The cops said he was the one. It nearly broke my heart when I realized what I done to you."

What a break! he exulted to himself. Boy, what a break! "You gonna gimme a little time while I'm in town then? I come a long ways just to see you, Lily."

She started as Paul called out: "Lily!" and said hastily: "See? I told you. . . . Meet me at the park gates tomorra—ten o'clock." She turned hastily and came back to the counter where Paul glowered at her.

"What for you talk so much?" he asked. "You want to make me crazy?"

"Shut your greasy face!" she muttered to him. "He's a stranger in town. He was askin' me directions about the street cars."

"You like to talk too much to strangers," he said, turning and smiling at the boys and girls who were impatiently clinking their coins on the marble counter.

WHEN John finished telling him about Marius Schaeffer's outburst at the park, Harvey scowled and said: "I think he's going out of his head."

"That's what his wife's afraid of," John said. "But Marius is—"

"And if he does get his skull cracked one of these days, it'll serve him right. Because he's no better than a traitor. You'd think that America, not Germany, was the enemy."

"That's not it, Harvey," John said quickly. "Marius means well, and he says what he believes. The country gives him the right to. You can't blame—"

"You're too soft, John," Harvey told him. "I just wish I had the handling of him, of all the troublemakers like him. You'd think in war-time, at least, they'd quiet down. But the war to them is just a chance to make trouble, to stab the country in the back while it's fighting for them—" He broke off abruptly. "Excuse me, John, the Travis's are just coming in. I've got to say hello to them. . . . I'll be back in a minute." He got up and worked his way through the chatting groups in the big room.

John watched him go, and then looked with distaste about him. He did not like Harvey's new house that pretended to be a French château. He disliked the gilt and fancy embroidery of the furniture, the ripe rugs, the stiff golden-threaded drapes that the interior decorator from Chicago had supplied. It was a show-place, he thought, a money-place. It bragged of money with a hard complacent smugness that was like Harvey himself.

Harvey sat down beside him again. "As I was saying, John. . . . It's men like your friend there who are responsible for the trouble down at the Iron Works—I.W.W. pamphlets and talk of One Big Union. If they had their way, they'd turn the country upside down

with a revolution tomorrow! But if I could have my way with them, I'd throw them all into Leavenworth for life."

"It was revolutionists made this country, Harvey," John said. He grinned maliciously. "So you better be careful how you handle them, or they'll have your head."

"That's nonsense, John! Why—" but Annabelle was coming quickly towards them, and Harvey looked up at her inquiringly.

"Now, you two," she said fretfully, "can't you forget business for a while? After all, Harvey, your guests. . . ."

"Yes, Belle, I know," Harvey said. "We'll be with you in a minute."

She turned abruptly away, and Harvey said to the old man: "She's all upset. Phil promised he'd be here, but I guess he couldn't get away."

Ah, there's your weak spot, John thought, catching the softness of Harvey's tone when he spoke of Phil. "Still working for the newspaper in Stanton, is he?" he asked. "The *News-Courier*, isn't it?"

Harvey nodded. "He's got me upset too, I'm willing to admit. Frankly, I don't know what to do about him." He shook his head slowly. "No, I don't know. All my life, I—" He stopped and looked vaguely across the room.

"Yes? All your life you what, Harvey?"

"I tried, I tried often, John, but I could never get to him," Harvey said jerkily. "There was always a book between us. It was like trying to talk to somebody in a dream. . . . I remember when the power-plant was building—you'd think a boy would be glad of a chance to poke around, see what was going on, but he never showed the slightest interest. It never seemed to touch him when I'd tell him that some day he'd be running everything when I, when we are gone." He hesitated. "But all the time he was growing up, I kept looking forward to the day when he and I would be together at a job of work the way Father and I. . . . I kept telling myself: 'Well, when he finishes with the books, then I'll have him.'" His face darkened. "And now maybe I never will. If the draft should

get him—" He broke off. "You saw how nervous Belle was? She'll go off her head if he's shipped to France."

"There's plenty of others going," the old man said strongly.

"Belle's after me every minute to do something about him—seems to think I've got the Draft Board in my pocket. And I suspect that she's been after Francis to try to use some influence at the State House."

"No, Harvey! Godalmighty, she can't expect—!"

"You don't have to tell me, John," Harvey said. "But just the same—well, frankly, I can't help thinking that Phil would be of more use to his country right here in the Bank or down at the Works than he'd be in the trenches in France. It isn't as though his job with me would be just pushing a pen or swinging a pick."

The old man stared at him. I wonder, he was thinking, did Will's father talk this way about him when Lincoln was calling out the troops—as if the country would sink into the ground if he went off to fight for it. I guess he did. That's why he bought a substitute for Will, so Will being of more use to the country could die of apoplexy on the floor of the Bank. As for me, he thought, listening with contempt to Harvey's troubled voice, I'm glad I left my arm in the surgeon's pail.

". . . tried every way to wake him up," Harvey was saying, "to make a man of him, get him ready to take his place with me."

The old man listened wearily. What with the effort of the speech he had made at the rally and the excitement Marius had caused, he had arrived tired at the party, and now he was weary of Harvey's talk, weary with disgust. He looked across the room for Josie, and found that she was already trying to catch his eye. She nodded towards the door, and he lowered his head in agreement, and then saw her rise and move towards Francis who was laughing with three or four men by the windows.

"Of course, you haven't seen him much lately," Harvey said.

"He was always a bookish boy," the old man said absently.

The last time he had seen Phil was two summers ago, just after Phil had been graduated from the State University. It had been at

Harvey's summer place up at the Lakes, a hot summer it was too, and he had been glad of the cool breeze off the water. He remembered Phil as tall and weedy, with a shut look on his face. He had come across him one afternoon stretched out on his belly on a rock down by the lake, reading to himself in a mumble from the small book in his hand. When he had asked Phil what he was reading, the boy with a questioning look had passed the book up to him. *Des Imagistes*—he remembered the title because he had not realized at first that it was French and had been puzzled a second or two. He had looked quickly through the book, and Phil had said tolerantly that it wouldn't make much sense to him, he guessed, and John had replied shortly, no, he guessed it wouldn't.

" . . . gave me a half-promise last time he was home that he'd give the Bank a try in September. But now if the draft gets him—"

"So there's some things you can't manage, is that it, Harvey?" the old man said with sudden harshness. "All you can do is hope and pray."

Harvey stared at him in surprise. Then he said grimly: "Yes. Why not? Am I any different from the thousands of others who don't want their sons blown to bits? You needn't be so intolerant, John, of what's only natural."

"You don't understand, Harvey," John said. "It's only that I think that—"

"I can guess what you've been thinking," Harvey said. He looked at John's empty sleeve. "Not that you haven't the right."

"Ah, no, Harvey," the old man told him quickly. "That's got nothing to do with it."

"But it's not as one-sided as you think," Harvey said. "It isn't as if I, the Bank, hadn't done its share to help win the war." He fished in his pocket, and drew out a neatly folded telegram. "This came this afternoon," he told the old man. "I read it to the crowd before you got here." He handed the paper to John.

The old man took it and read:

"I have your telegram and congratulate you heartily upon your

fine showing in the Liberty Loan. W. G. McAdoo, Secretary of the Treasury."

"I think I'll have it framed," Harvey said. "We sold \$56,000 more than our allowance. It's something to be proud of."

Then Josie and Francis came across the room to them, and Josie said: "We've had a nice time, Harvey, but it's getting late, and time we were all going."

"Good-night," Francis said. He shook hands with Harvey. "Certainly a handsome place you got here, Harvey."

"Thanks," Harvey said. "Any time you can get John and Josie to move out of that gloomy, solemn old place of theirs, I'll put you in touch with my architect."

Francis smiled. "I'd have a great chance of moving them out. Even if the place was blown up by German spies, they'd live in the cellar."

"You know you love the house, Francis!" Josie said.

"I could wish for a little more light once in a while," he said, smiling at her quick indignation.

She turned towards him. "You know the house is always full of sunshine and fresh air, Francis. If it weren't, we wouldn't live there a moment—for Tommy's sake."

"Spitfire!" he said. "Cool off—you know I was only joking."

"I'll just say good-night to Annabelle and the others," John said quickly.

He was halfway across the room when the door from the hall opened, and a tall, thin young man in a khaki uniform came in, followed by a small girl in dark clothes. He stood with an expression of amused surprise, looking around at the crowd.

Annabelle brushed by John and went quickly across the room. "Phil!" she cried out. "Why didn't you answer my letter? We didn't know you were coming." She stopped abruptly. "What are you doing in uniform?"

"What do you think I'm doing, Mother? I've enlisted, that's what," Phil said. "And married too." He drew the small girl around

by the hand to face his mother. "This is Gwen Morey as was," he went on. "Now Mrs. Phil Cantrell. . . . Give her a kiss, and let her go to bed—she's tired."

Mechanically Annabelle took the girl's hand. Then she said incoherently: "Married? . . . enlisted . . . you're joking . . . I don't believe it!" She made groping gestures with her hands. "Harvey, why don't you say something? Do something?"

Harvey came close to his son. "If this is your idea of a joke, Phil. . . . Is this more of your story-book nonsense?"

"Why are you so excited?" Phil said.

In his pleasure in the boy, John Cantrell almost laughed aloud. "It's a rebel," he said to himself, "it's got a long neck like a turkey gobbler, and it's something of an actor, but it's a rebel. God-almighty!"

At his side Harvey said in a low voice: "You see, John?"

"What I see looks good to me!" the old man told him in exultation.

"WHERE's Jenny and Martha?" Eddie Mundy asked his mother. "I thought they went with you."

"They did," she said, "but a bunch of the boys and girls were going to the ice cream parlor afterwards, and I let them go, too. . . . Jenny recited beautifully. . . . It was quite an exciting meeting—they nearly had a riot there."

"What happened? Did they find a German spy in the crowd and tear him to pieces with their bare hands?"

"No," she said, "but Mr. Schaeffer jumped up on the platform when the whole thing was over and tried to tell them what fools they were. If Connell the councilman hadn't stopped them, the policemen would've clubbed him to death. I nearly died when they went for him."

"He's made up his mind to be a martyr, hasn't he?" Eddie said absently. He was thinking that one of these days very soon, at least before the draft got him, he would go downtown and have a talk with Councilman Francis Connell about a job in his law office. He

smiled a little, and his mother said: "There's nothing funny about it—he might have got his head split open."

"I was thinking about something else," Eddie said. "I was thinking about getting a job, getting back some of the money we put into making me a lawyer. I've got to find sheep to shear, you know."

He's hard, hard as nails, Helen Mundy thought. I'd hate to have to go against him in anything. But I made him this way—it's the only way for him to get ahead. She looked at her son's thin-lipped mouth, at the lines on his forehead, and the hair already receding high on his temples. He had worked like a dog to get through the State University and its Law School. But he had never complained. No, she mused, and neither did we. But we've got somewhere for our work, and she looked with satisfaction around the comfortable room. It was lucky that the Cantrells had grabbed the farm for their schemes, or we'd all be there yet, still shoveling cowdung.

Yes, she told herself, lucky they had been pushed out, remembering calmly now the mean and dirty summer they had struggled through while Harry was looking for a job. Luck, she mused, pure luck that Schaeffer's had needed a clerk the day the Bank closed and the crowd had rioted in its misery about its money. And in her mind's eye she saw herself coming out of the side door of the Bank with the other wretches who had rushed in with her, and, as if drawn by the magic magnet of luck, going directly across the Square into Schaeffer's, the first store she saw, to ask for a job.

"One of my girls is leaving to get married," Marius Schaeffer had said. "I'll give you a job," and that was all there was to it.

That had been the upturn in their fortunes. Less than two weeks later Harry had got a job in the Gallogly Brewery stables. She and he together had pulled the family uphill again. She glanced contentedly at Eddie, who, with his feet cocked up on the big sofa, was reading the *Chronicle*. Fifteen years sliding slowly down, only ten years pulling slowly up. They had all felt the strain of the pull,

but they had not faltered for a minute, not even the girls when they were little. She felt a sudden deep pleasure in looking about the comfortable room and seeing what they had all together wrested from the miserly world that clung like a mad hungry dog to every bone and every rag.

But they were not safe yet, she told herself. If Eddie, now that he was graduated from the Law School and was preparing to go to work himself, had the notion that she would quit her job and loaf, he was crazy. Harry, it was true, had worked up to be foreman of the shipping department at the Brewery, but if the Prohibition fanatics had their way, he might be out of a job any day. Only her job as office-manager at Schaeffer's was certain, good as long as she wanted it, provided, she told herself suddenly, that Mr. Schaeffer did not ruin himself and his business by his socialist talk and his wild behavior like tonight's at the mass meeting.

Silly of the man not to keep his ideas to himself, and even sillier to hold such dreamy ideas. He's been bitten by the dog, she told herself. That boy of his though—there was no nonsense about him. Albert and she together, if they had a free rein, could make the business hum. If the old man wanted to, he could expand into the little stores on either side, he could double his business in no time. And there was no need to spoil the help either—three weeks' vacation with pay, and insurance for them, and bonuses from the profits, all that was really stupid: more of his silly socialism, more of the tenderness where the mad dog of the world had bitten him. Every man for himself was the bitter truth he would have to face up to some day, she mused.

But Eddie had learned it—learned it long ago. "Liberty Bonds!" he had said. "What's the matter with munitions stocks? They'll pay you fatter dividends. Of course, it's blood money, but so are Liberty Bonds. All the money in the world is blood money anyway, as near as I can find out." She was a little frightened by his harshness. Well, he would not be soft then about her keeping her job. Let the world bang its head around—they could still take their security from it while it tore at itself in its madness.

"What're you mumbling about, Ma?" Eddie asked her, and she raised her head to find him looking at her curiously.

"Just thinking how lucky we've been, that's all."

"Well, you better pray that the luck holds out," he said. He dropped the paper and swung his feet to the floor.

"Why, Eddie?"

"Did you forget there's a war on? It'll be a fine thing," he went on with a wry grin, "if after all this work—yours and Pa's and the girls' and mine—it'll be a fine thing if I get my head that's so full of legal knowledge blown off by a shell in some dirty hole in France."

So, she was thinking, I'd forgotten. The dog's got his teeth in us after all. "It's no joke," she said, suddenly frightened.

"What can I do about it?" he shrugged. "Maybe we ought to start going to church."

"Certainly not," she said. "You'll find yourself being prayed over to make a good Christian soldier with a bloody bayonet killing other good Christian soldiers who've also been prayed over. God knows," she went on vehemently, "if there's one thing I hate it's the hypocrisy of a man of the cloth to get up and pray for successful murder, having by some hocus-pocus of his conscience squared his Christian principles with his bloody prayers. Either it's outrageous hypocrisy, or else good proof that he ought to have treatment for the weakness of his head!"

Eddie snorted with laughter. "You ought to be burned at the stake," he told her. "Just the same, draft or no draft, I'm going down tomorrow to ask for a job. There'll still be room in Persepolis for a smart young lawyer after the war's over. Provided I don't come back in a box."

"Isn't there any way you can get out of going, Eddie? No way at all?"

He shook his head. "The law was drawn up by better lawyers than I am yet. I'm stuck. If my number is picked, I'll have to go. . . . Good old Woodrow Wilson, the young man's friend!" he said, and picked up the paper again.

"WHY are you so quiet, you two?" Sadie asked as she came blinking into the brightness of the living-room.

"The children are asleep?" Mrs. Bandler asked.

"Yeah," Sadie said. "Esther's fast asleep, but Arthur—he's such a little devil—wouldn't close his eyes till I told him I'd take him home tomorrow if he didn't fall asleep. You should've seen how he got quiet right away."

"An angel, and smart like the devil," Morris Bandler said. He smiled at his daughter, pleased by the look of content on her plump features.

"You two spoil him so much, no wonder he gets scared about going home," Sadie said.

"Spoil him? Who spoils him? I should live if we spoil him!" Hannah Bandler said indignantly. "To me he's good like an angel—everything I say, he minds me. Better than you," she asserted.

"Yeah," Sadie said. "You know why, don't you? Because you never say 'no' to him, that's why. Neither does Isadore."

"Isadore'll come visit this Sunday?" Mrs. Bandler asked.

"I dunno, Ma, I don't think so. He's taking inventory this week for the August sale. He won't come till a week from Sunday. . . . In the new car," she said. "A Briscoe—a beauty. Wait'll you see it. It's even got a self-starter."

"Business is good?" Morris asked.

"Wonderful," Sadie said. "Isadore's afraid to breathe, he says, because he might wake up from the dream. Believe me, he's some smart business man, too. . . . You know the idea he thought up? He's giving War Saving Stamps to everybody who buys a suite. You should've seen the way people flocked into the place. Of course, everybody's imitating him now. But wasn't it a smart idea?"

"Believe me, he's got a head on his shoulders, your Isadore," Mrs. Bandler asserted. She sighed.

"Say, what's the matter with you anyway—both of you?" Sadie asked again. "Someone'd think you were sorry to have your only daughter and your grandchildren here for a visit. I guess I better start packing!"

"Sadie!" her mother exclaimed.

"Sadie, don't tease," Morris said. "I tell her and tell her she don't have to worry, but she won't believe me—she wants to run, she wants to fly to her Davey."

"Davey?" Sadie turned to her mother. "What's the matter with him? I got a letter from him just before I left. Everything was fine, he said. For God's sake, what's the matter? Is he sick?"

Morris Bandler turned to his wife. "See how foolish you are with your excitement! Now you made Sadie excited too, so you can both tear your hair out."

"For Heaven's sake, Pa, will you tell me what it is before I scream?"

"So it's nothing," her father said emphatically. "Nothing. Comes a letter from Dave he's gonna be a doctor in the army, so already your mother sees him dead on the floor."

"Morris, don't talk like that!" his wife said.

"Here, read the letter yourself," he went on, "so you'll see there's nothing to make such excitement about. . . . Say, what can he do?" He shrugged his shoulders. "They need doctors, it's a war, it's not a game, so Dave'll be a doctor by the army for a while."

Sadie took the letter from her father's outstretched hand, and bent anxiously to the light.

"Dear Folks, [she read] We've been through quite a hot spell here in Chicago, but it's a little cooler today. I've got some big news for you, but I don't want you to get upset about it because it's really nothing to worry about. We're all signed up, I mean the young doctors and internes here, in the hospital, in the Medical Corps of the U. S. army! So far it hasn't meant anything except wearing a snappy uniform as you can see in the snapshot I am enclosing. The name of the girl beside me is Harriet Greenberg. She is a nurse here, and pretty smart, too, as well as good-looking. Anyway, we all feel pretty swell with our uniforms. Last night when I went out to the corner drugstore for cigarettes, there were some soldiers there, and you should have seen how they saluted me

when I walked in. I was so excited I just had enough sense to salute them back and walk out. Harriet said when I came back that my face was as red as a newborn babe's, and I guess she was right.

"Anyway, I'm glad I enlisted, and if I'm sent to France I'll be glad to go. You know, when I put on my uniform for the first time, I remembered a talk I had with Pa a long time ago one Fourth of July when I was all excited about the soldiers in the parade. I never dreamed that some day I'd be a soldier myself, an American soldier. But the point is that I remember that Pa said something about a Jew being free only in his house and in his synagogue. But I thought he was wrong then, and I do now because I have been free everywhere in America. And if in past times in other countries Jews have paid wrong with hate, then certainly a Jew like me in this country wants to pay right with love. A man should be willing to pay his country back for what it has given him.

"Some long letter!—I didn't think I was going to write so much when I started, and Harriet's waiting downstairs for me to take her to the movies. Glad that business is good. If you see any of my old friends like Al Schaeffer, tell him to drop me a line. And be sure and remember me to Indie. Write to me soon. Lots of love for both of you. I'm glad Sade's coming to visit you for a vacation. Tell Ma not to spoil the kids. So long! Your loving son, Dave."

Sadie laid the letter down and looked at her parents. Her mother watched her anxiously. "So what's the matter, Ma?" Sadie said. "Pa's right—what're you so excited about?"

"I don't like it he's a soldier, that's all," Hannah Bandler said sharply. "A Jewish boy shouldn't be a soldier. A doctor, yes; a lawyer, yes; a business man, yes. But a soldier? No! I saw enough soldiers in my life already."

"Well, for Heaven's sake, how can the feller help it?" Sadie said. "Besides he looks wonderful in that uniform. . . . I wonder how Isadore would look."

Mrs. Bandl^r exclaimed. "God forbid he should have to wear one!"

"So now you got something else to worry about," Morris said. He was rereading Dave's letter, stroking his beard while his lips formed the syllables. Foolish Davey, he was thinking, so now he's an American. He's got a uniform, he's a soldier—so he's not a Jew any more, he's a real American. Foolish, foolish boy. And through his mind there passed the bitter memory of innumerable betrayals—Jews who had become Spaniards, Jews who had become Germans, Jews who had become Russians, willing to give their lives to the countries that gave them a taste of peace, a moment of rest in the long, long wandering. When America, like the others, spits him out, then he will lift himself from the dust of the gutter, he will awake, and be a Jew again. In his house, in his synagogue—in only two places will he be free. Foolish Davey, he thought—kind heart, willing heart, be happy with your dream.

He raised his head suddenly, hearing Sadie say: ". . . when he marries her."

"Marries?—marries who? What? When?" he asked.

Sadie laughed. "Gee, you're a couple of innocents, all right. This girl in the picture—what's her name, Harriet Greenberg—when he marries her, I was telling Ma, we'll have some trip to Chicago, believe me."

"You're crazy, Sadie," her mother said. "Where does it say in the letter one word, a single word from marrying? No place!"

"That's all you know about it." Sadie pulled her chair up close to the table. Her father stared soberly at her. "When did he ever mention a girl before?" she asked. "In all the letters he ever wrote from college, from medical school—think!—did he ever mention a girl before?"

"So what difference does it make?" Hannah asked.

"So it makes this difference," Sadie said. "I bet a dollar he marries the girl!"

"What's the excitement?" her father asked. "If he marries her, fine! He's a young man, so if he wants to get married, it's only natural. What's the fuss?"

"It's no fuss," Sadie said. "Only, women get excited about get-

ting married and things like that, Pa. . . . Just imagine—my little brother Davey married!”

Yes, Morris thought, let him be married. And soon. Let him settle down to a home, a wife, children, and find a little peace, a little strength before he must set out on his wanderings again, the short peace between the long, long journeys. Let him enjoy the hungry fever, the sick and anxious imagination that makes him think he has found a home because a country teases him for a time with a dream of freedom until he wakes up one day and finds himself in chains again, stumbling behind the slave-merchants across the deserts of the world. Take your happiness quickly, Davey, he mused, build your wall, shut out the world until, like an animal wild with the wounds it has inflicted upon itself, it will turn upon you who have never asked anything of it but the peace of your exile from Canaan and tear you with its claws. Davey, Davey, listen to me. . . . It is not your father alone who speaks this wisdom to you, it is his father and his father's father and all the wailing voices that rise up from the blackest and bloodiest pages of the world's mad story. He groaned deep in his throat, and his wife and his daughter looked at him in alarm. “Nothing, nothing,” he said impatiently. “Let Davie go his own way, live his own way, learn his own way. He should only be happy is all I pray for him. . . .”

He got out his chess set and began to work out the chess problem in the *Tageblatt*, still musing, remembering his own pilgrimage through the streets of America with the dirty gunny sack slung over his shoulder and hearing his cracked voice begging a living from the refuse of the Gentile: “Raks, bottles—any raks t'day?” and hearing the replies hooted from the alleys, from the streets, from the windows, from the rooftops of the world: “Jew! Jew bastard! Stinkin' sheeny! Jew! Hey, sonofabitch of a Jewbastard!” the hoots and jeers and yells echoing and re-echoing in the deserts of his never-ending journey.

“WELL, what did you think of it?” Francis asked, relaxing into Josie's easy chair and stretching his legs out in front of him.

"What did I think of what?" Josie answered. She was sitting in front of the mirror brushing her hair.

"Sometimes you get me mad," he said, smiling at her reflection in the mirror. "I meant the meeting—the speech I made. How'd it go?"

"Oh, it was all right," she said. "Speeches come easy to you."

"Now what do you mean by that, Josie?" He bent forward and frowned at her reflection in the glass. "Didn't you think it was impressive?"

She laid the hair-brush down and turned to face him. "Impressive, yes—it was impressive. But did you have to impress anyone? What were you doing, working for votes?"

He looked at her in surprise. "That's no way to talk to me, Josie," he said. "I meant every word of it."

"Well, you laid it on pretty thick. You had no right to talk that way." She turned back to her mirror.

"In Heaven's name," he said, "what's wrong now? I tell you, Josie, it's been very hard to please you these last few years. What do you mean, I laid it on thick?"

"Oh, all that stuff," she told him. "Here these boys are going off to risk their lives, and you send them off with a blast of hot air—oratory! It's easy for you to talk, you're not going."

"I'm sorry," he said, "but that's my way. Maybe you want me to enlist? Maybe you think I should have your father write my speeches for me?"

"That wouldn't be a bad idea," she said.

"Come, now, Josie, what's the matter?" he asked gently. "You're upset about something, I can see that." He smiled uncertainly. "What else've I done that you should be taking this schoolteacher tone with me?"

"What else? Well, if you must know, I didn't like what you said at Harvey's—about this house, I mean," she said.

He was bewildered. "This house? What about it? I don't even remember what I said, it mattered so little."

"That's just it," she said.

"You mean what I said about getting a new place?"

"Yes. You talked to Harvey Cantrell as if this house were a dark hovel compared with that money-rotten place of his!"

"I meant nothing by it, Josie. I like this house." He frowned again. "But maybe it's the atmosphere I don't like—straight-backed and stuffy and overcritical." His tone changed, and he said pleadingly: "What is it, Josie? What's come over you? After ten years this is not the kind of talk our marriage should come down to."

He watched her face in the mirror, but her expression did not change. She pulled the brush over her hair with slow even strokes, and he saw the deep gleam of silver in its brown smoothness. After a moment he went on, raising his voice against her silence: "The last few years I've done nothing to please you. If I make a speech, you call it cheap oratory; if I praise another man's house, you get insulted. It's been like this ever since young Tommy came—I've never opened my mouth but what I've been afraid of your criticizing."

He rose and stood by the dressing table so that he could look directly at her. "All these little stings—what's behind them all, Josie? Let's hear it, and we'll have it out now. . . . It's taken the heart out of me bit by bit the way we've been going all this time."

She said abruptly: "Tell me, Francis—those power-plant shares you gave the baby when he was born. How did you get them? Why were they in my name so many years? Why had you never told me about them before?"

"What? What, Josie?" he stammered. "What's that got to do—" He broke off. "I see," he said. "So that's it."

"Yes, Francis. That's part of it. There was something shady in the way you got them, wasn't there?"

He did not answer, and she repeated: "Wasn't there, Francis?"

He shook his head. "They were for services to Harvey," he said. "Proper legal services." His eyes looked blankly into hers.

"That's not true, Francis, or they would not have been in my name even before we were married. . . . When you made them over to Tommy, you bragged about how you got them. Maybe

you said more than you meant to because you were so excited about the baby. . . . They were some kind of bribe, weren't they?"

"What are you fussing about?" he said with sudden harshness, "It would take a week to explain the ins and outs of it. . . . If that's the only thing that's been troubling you—"

"It's not that alone, Francis," she said quickly. "It's what it stands for. Your relation to Harvey, I mean."

"I don't know what you're talking about, Josie!"

"Yes, you do," she said. "I wish you'd give it up—your politics and all the rest of your activities outside of your private law practice. Especially your work for Harvey Cantrell. Every day you work for him is a vexation to me."

He said slowly: "So you've come to the point at last, have you? Why didn't you ever come out with it before?"

For the first time she seemed to soften. "Ah, Francis, I didn't want to believe that you would be mixed up in such things. It hurt me when I—"

"You're a funny one," he said icily. "What things would you be talking about now? I've been connected with Harvey for more than fifteen years now. What's the matter with my working for him?"

She drew back from him, and said sharply: "Because you do his dirty work, that's why. And I just don't like my husband to be doing any man's dirty work."

"Harvey's work is your father's work," he said.

"No, that's not so," she answered. "Father may be president of the Bank, but you know as well as he does that he's only a figure-head. He doesn't know what dirty work you and Harvey have been up to, and if he did, he'd fight you both till the last breath went out of him."

"'Dirty work' again!" he said furiously. "What's a schoolteacher know about dirty work?"

"You think I'm a fool because I was a dreamy schoolteacher, Francis? Well, I'm not. I can read the papers, I've listened to you talk, I can draw my own conclusions."

"Yes? About what, for instance?" he challenged her harshly.

"Any number of things," she told him. "For instance, what happened two years ago to the petition of the Citizen's League to lower the electric rates? It was killed in the Council, wasn't it? And you were the one who killed it, Francis. You told me so yourself, you boasted about it because it was a victory for the Cantrells, and so, of course, I'd be proud. And Harvey paid you well for that, didn't he? He could afford to, seeing all he makes on his high rates."

He tried to interrupt her, but she went steadily on: "That's one thing. How about the time the Council moved against having Harvey's munitions plant inside the city limits and wanted it over the river? Who stopped that move? You did, I think. And didn't you feel like a murderer when they had that explosion and that woman was killed by a chunk of flying steel? Didn't you?"

"But that was the wildest kind of an accident, Josie!" he said. "How can you blame me? It would happen about once in a million years. It might've happened just as well across the river as this side of it."

"But it was a life, Francis! Has Harvey got you so trained that a human life means nothing to you? What does he care, what do you care so long as the money rolls in?"

He said heavily: "You exaggerate the whole thing, Josie. To have a munitions factory across the river would've cost thousands and thousands. Why, it would have meant building a whole new plant instead of just making over the old machine shops. Harvey couldn't take the risk. He's doing a gamble now anyway. If the war stops soon, he stands to lose thousands on his investment. And in the meantime, he's doing a patriotic thing, helping to win the war. If that woman was killed, she died in a good cause, didn't she? It's her life for the good of hundreds, maybe of thousands. The whole thing's too complicated for you or anyone else to judge, Josie."

She was silent. The warm breath of the summer night lifted the curtains at the windows.

"You can't think of things in such a simple way," he said sooth-

ingly, thinking he had defeated her. "In your mind, black is black, and white is white, and that's all there is to it. But it's not that way in life. Things get mixed up, and what you think is black may turn out white, and what you think is white may turn out black. And most of the time they get so mixed up, they're just plain gray, and no man can untangle one from the other. You talk to your father, and he'll tell you the same thing."

Her eyes flashed at him. "All this twisting and turning!" she said. "What you're saying is that anything you do is all right because no one can tell truth from falsehood, good from evil. But it's not so, Francis. That's a soul-destroying belief. It's a license to lie and cheat and kill!"

"Josie!" he exclaimed. "It's terrible venom you're spitting out at me!"

"It's not venom, it's truth," she said. "And it stings, doesn't it? Tonight when I heard you spouting about the faith and idealism of the soldiers, it almost made me sick to listen. I hated the hypocrisy of that speech, Francis."

"And hated me, too?" he asked. "Josie, Josie, where's the love we started with that you should come now to such bitter thoughts of me?"

"I still love you, Francis," she said steadily. "All I want is for you to be the man you can be."

"I am," he said. "I'm that man now."

"No, you're not," she told him. "You're Harvey's hired man."

"You're sour on everybody but yourself, is that it?" he burst out at her. "It's easy for you to sit here in your quiet room full of the old things, the rich things that were handed down to you, reading the paper and playing with the baby and thinking meantime with a shiver of the dirt and sweat of the world. Well, you're right—it is a dirty world, most of it, and a man, no matter what he works at, has to do some dirty work in it. There was only one person ever who went through it and came out of it clean, and that was our Saviour." Imploringly, he said: "Josie, you can't mean the things you've said to me tonight. If I thought my speech was going

to turn you so against me, I'd have cut my tongue out before I uttered a syllable of it. But who are you to sit in judgment on me? If I could pull out of the world, if I could retire into a monastery, I could live the life you want me to live. But then I'd not be working, loving, marrying, raising a child—I would not be alive with all the force that's in me to do my part in life. Josie, don't you see it's only a dead man that's a pure man? Would you want me dead, Josie, to prove I'm right?"

She did not speak.

"Josie!" he cried. "Answer me!"

She began to brush her hair again, drawing the brush with long slow strokes through the thickness of her hair, while he stared at her.

"Francis?" she said at last.

"Still speaking to me, are you?" he exclaimed. "Still find me alive, do you?"

"Give it up, Francis," she said. "Go back to private practice. Resign from the Council, tell Harvey you're done with him."

"Are you crazy, Josie?" he said violently. "I think you're off your head. And I'll leave you to get back your senses."

She laid down the brush. "Where are you going at this hour?"

"If you care to know, I'm going down to the Ward Club. There's a party for some of the boys who're going off tomorrow"—he smiled wryly—"and I'm to make a speech."

"That's my answer, isn't it?" she said.

"Yes, for whatever it means to you, to both of us, that's your answer. . . . Good-night," he said, and went out.

THERE was no need, John Cantrell told himself, sitting at his desk and looking through the papers strewn upon it, there was no need for him to go downtown tomorrow morning for the parade of soldiers to the train. For him, the parade had already taken place. It had marched in 1776, and his great-grandfather had gone marching in it with General Greene's army and had not come back, dead of swamp fever somewhere in South Carolina; then his grand-

father had gone, and retreating with the others from the red glare of the burning Capitol had watched with rage and anguish the centre of his country's life rolling in smoke and flame on the distant sky; and then it was his turn, and he had gone, lying all night on the floor of the jolting train, and then marching in the uneasy threatening silence of the streets of Baltimore on his way to Washington; and now it was Phil who was going, Phil the book reader, the dreamy one, Phil who would not make a good bank-manager, but who would be a good soldier. All the Phils of the country were going, had always gone.

Yes, he had already seen the parade that would move through the streets tomorrow, the parade of the American creed. His hand idly turned the pages of his manuscript, and he heard occasionally from Josie's room the murmuring of her and Francis's voices. And if the creed, he mused, meant something to the people who came after the makers of the creed were long dead, if it persisted among their children and their children's children, and if newcomers came searching for it and were content when they found it, then it was a good creed whose promises gave them strength in the long march towards where the creed began to take on a form and a body, till at last the people and the creed would be the same, the deed one and indivisible. He thought again of lanky Phil in the parade, and he nodded with satisfaction. He told himself that in a way Marius was marching in it, too. But Harvey?—what was he marching so smug-faced, so heavy-footed at? "Money," he mumbled to himself, "money and more money."

He picked up his pen impatiently and bent over his manuscript, but he still saw Harvey's face with its look of hard satiety. When and how had Harvey left the parade, he wondered. It was when Harvey made a pile of money, he told himself. But it wasn't money alone he was thinking of when he had built the power-plant. The money was only a sign that a man had accomplished something, a job of work. But the money had unbalanced Harvey, made him a little crazy even, so that he was losing his humanity like that ancient king whose golden touch had touched himself to gold. The

way he had talked tonight, for instance, of letting another man's son die in battle, but not his own, because his own could work in the Bank, could work for money—that was a little crazy.

He picked up his pen again and began to make idle scratches on the paper in front of him. Aside from the War, there was trouble in the air, he told himself, remembering suddenly Harvey's talk about trouble with the men at the Iron Works, there was a feeling of a storm coming up in America. It was the way people felt in the '50's when the talk of civil war was everywhere, and they were afraid at last of what was coming, because they felt the invisible storm piling up beyond the horizon. And then the talk was over, the time had come for action, and the guns spoke louder than the words.

He shook his head, and turned to the last pages he had written. He had been working a long time, nearly five years, on Persepolis's part in the Civil War. He had talked with all his cronies at the G.A.R. posts about what he was doing, and they had let him have whatever papers he wanted; he had gone around to see people, descendants of men who had fought, and borrowed the soldiers' letters from them; he had gone through the files of the *Persepolis True Citizen* for the twenty years between 1850 and 1870; at the public library he had taken notes from all the material they had—the account books, the diaries, the journals, the yellowed packets of letters. He had gone up to the State Historical Society in Stanton and gone over all the material they brought out for him, and then had lingered a long time before the glass cases that held the tattered, blackened regimental flags. Piece by piece he had put together a map of the movements of the Persepolis companies in the Southern fields, together with a record of every skirmish, every battle, they had taken part in.

And to all this he had brought his own memories—the crowded train with its smell of soft-coal smoke and sour sweat; the memories of songs, jokes, curses, prayers; the memories of the touch of cloth to skin, of metal to skin, the feel of the gunstock in the hand and of the bayonet steel on icy mornings sticking to the

fingers; the memories of the taste of things—mush, molasses, rum, hard fat-sticky beef, the strong brown tobacco packed between the teeth and the jaw; the feel of the weary body pressed to the unyielding stone-angry earth; the long marches through the soft country, and then the acrid smell of gun smoke, the rattle of musketry and the screech of Minié balls; the screams of the body-torn horses, the men staggering and falling; the shaking with ague and with fever, and the cries and moans, the delirium of the wounded; and to all this, his memory of what had gone on inside him, the fear that made his legs shake and his lips numb, that made his bladder tremble, the muttering to himself to go forward when his entrails wilted at the sound of rifle fire up ahead, the hot wild rage of the hand-to-hand fighting over a crumbling wall, and the soft shock of his bayonet going into the belly of a blond-bearded man with blood already running from a deep scratch on his face, the sick taste of vomit bubbling up in his throat, and at last the gashing blow of the shrapnel that tore his arm and knocked him flat on his back, knowing no pain for a little while until from far away he heard a hoarse screaming that he could not stop because it did not seem to be his own voice, and the nerve-knotting, grating rasp of the surgeon's saw before he fainted with the convulsing pain—all the living memories of the mind, the heart, and the senses welling up and flooding back over the long-gone years, and all, all to be seized in their springing life and laid out in the ceremonies of the cool black words on the ice-white paper.

For what he had written, he told himself despairingly, riffling the pages of his manuscript, was only the inscription on the tombstone. Yes, the heat and the motion of the life he had tried to summon up from the deeps of memory died away in his words as he wrote them down. It was not the craft alone that he lacked, he told himself. No, it was understanding, the meaning of what he had lived and remembered that evaded him. He bent his head into the circle of light over his desk and prepared to read, troubled by a vague vision of time and circumstance squatting invisible above the web of life they unceasingly wove, and he saw men ensnared,

dangling by the tiny thread which was at once their life and their illusion of freedom, before the spiders darted out upon them. All men walked the iron road of time, and flashingly from nowhere the hammer of chance struck and smashed them on the anvil. No, he told himself violently, shaking his head, it's not true. That is not the meaning. Troubled, he began to read what he had written of Persepolis in the Civil War:

From the peace of the common routine of affairs the whole nation was suddenly stirred to a frenzy of excitement by the fall of Fort Sumter on April 14, 1861, and the call of the President on April 15 for 75,000 men. The terrible fact that the Nation had divided, that American must fight American, ran through the country like the swift flame of a prairie fire. At once in the North flared the feeling that the Union must be preserved at any cost, that the integrity of the Nation must be maintained with all the strength of its men and resources. Although the Nation was for the practical purposes of war almost without an army, without adequate equipment and material, yet almost overnight there sprang into existence a resolute and courageous army ready for action against a foe equally brave and resolute.

To this army Persepolis sent its men, and honor and grateful regard demand that their deeds be recorded, that the names of the valiant be perpetuated, that the memory of those who perished in the service of their country be cherished. A history of Persepolis would be forever incomplete without these memorials of her sons.

On the news of the outbreak of war, enthusiastic meetings sprang up spontaneously in the city for the purpose of encouraging enlistments and pledging solemnly the support of all to President Lincoln. From every liberty-pole or flagstaff in the city and its environs the National Banner was flung to the breeze. It billowed from the Farmers and Mechanics Bank in Congress Square, the First Congregational Church on Trevor Street; it rose high over the bell tower of the Free Academy, and graced the engine halls, the numerous factories, the schoolhouses, and many private residences. It was elevated at Williston, at the Falls of the

Quessota, it flew atop the County Courthouse, and at the junction of the Pikes. As these threw out their bright folds, other flags from all the surrounding villages and towns, Turner Falls, East Quessota, Franklin, Maybury, Burgin City, rose and waved in unison.

On April 16th Governor Samuel A. Halliwell's call for volunteers to fill the State's quota was issued. In twenty-two days, forty companies were raised, offering their services for the three months of enlistment. The 1st Regiment of State Volunteers was recruited in Stanton, the state capital. At once two young men of Persepolis, Albert N. Withers and Thomas Rawley, hastened thither and enrolled their names in Rifle Company A. This was the company that attained the distinction, within twelve hours from the opening of the roll, of reporting to the Adjutant General with its full complement of men and officers.

Four companies were raised in Persepolis for the 2nd and 3rd Regiments S.V. These companies were commanded respectively by Captains Francis B. Hubbard, Martin Pelley, Amos T. Wright, and Benjamin Twombly, all of Persepolis. In all, 16 commissioned officers and 188 enlisted men are credited to the city for the three months' service. The enlistments began on April 18. Captain Hubbard's company left the city for the camp at Stanton on April 22, and Captain Pelley's, the 24th. These were mustered into the 2nd S.V. as Companies D and E. Captain Wright's and Twombly's companies departed for Stanton on April 29 and were received into the 3rd S.V. When these companies departed, Persepolis was deeply moved. After a grand rally on the Fair Grounds, young and old accompanied the soldiers to the railway depot, embracing them as they marched, and invoking blessings on them and their cause. . . .

He turned the pages slowly as he read. There had been long minutes, however, when he had not read, but had gazed musingly at the dark windows where sometimes the leaves of the trees murmured while their branches scratched gently at the wall of the house. For him the names of the men, the names of the places, the chronicle he had written of their times and places moved with

majesty through his mind, here and there lighting a memory of what had almost been forgotten, stirring sometimes while he mused upon the windows a stronger rhythm of his heart and a warm flush over his body. But for those to whom it was strange because they had not lived it, he reflected, what did it say?—only that so many went to war, so many did not return, so many did return, so many were wounded, so many were killed—the dried leaves of history murmuring, borne whirling into the vortex of time. Yet not forgotten—no, not wholly forgotten, he told himself, thinking of the mass meeting earlier in the evening, hearing the vast heave of the crowd stirring the night alive, seeing the dark, silent rows of the soldiers going out to battle again, unafraid of the memories of death that murmured on the night wind, going out to fight again for the faith that the names upon his pages commemorated. No, never wholly forgotten, he thought in sudden exultation, and bent to his reading again:

. . . On the 9th, 16th and 24th of May, respectively, the three regiments departed for the seat of war, and were subsequently encamped near Washington where they were united in one command under Colonel John F. Trainor. In June they were stationed along the Virginia outposts, engaged, for the most part, in guard duty. But in July they were ordered to Centreville, and here for the first time went forward in force to engage the enemy. Though novices in the art of warfare, they conducted themselves ably in their first encounter, a sharp skirmish at Blackburn's Ford. On July 21 they took part in the disastrous action at Bull Run. In this engagement, of the Persepolis volunteers in the three regiments, 4 were killed and 34 wounded or missing. Corporal William B. Titus, Henry Gaines, and Fred W. Tarbell were taken prisoners. Arthur G. Conroy, a sergeant in Captain Hubbard's company, had been previously captured while out on a scouting expedition near Falls Church, Va., on June 19, and his fate was not known to his friends till the next October, when they received a letter from him, dated in July, from a Richmond prison. He endured a year's captivity before he was exchanged.

The three regiments completed their 3 months enlistment and were discharged in August. Two of the enlisted men from Persepolis had died in hospital of disease. The prisoners, Titus, Gaines, and Tarbell having been exchanged, immediately enlisted at the next call for volunteers.

This call had been issued by the President even before the discharge of the three-months' men—on May 4 for 300,000 men, and on July 10 for 500,000. The recruiting moved briskly, and enlistments were still spontaneous. In the great metropolises and in the tiniest of hamlets, the zeal for the measures of the National Government did not for a moment flag. In Persepolis when the Government on July 2, 1862, had called for more troops, 300,000 to serve for three years or for the duration of the war, and on August 4, 300,000 more to serve for nine months, the citizens set about raising the city's quota with undiminished enthusiasm. A grand rally was convened to aid the success of the enlistment. Public meetings were held in the assembly rooms of the Fletcher Block and on the Fair Grounds. Many of the volunteers at this period entered their names on the rolls in a spirit of earnest sobriety and self-dedication to the grand principles of freedom for which the war was being fought. The fervent love of country and its ideals penetrated to every class of society. Clerks came from the stores, laborers from the farms, and operatives from the mills and workshops—all to offer their strength and their lives in the service of their country.

The course of business in Persepolis, as well as of thought and talk, was turned with speed into the course of war. The workshops and factories of the city, notably the largest among them, the Cantrell Plow Works, turned with astonishing speed and facility to the manufacture of weapons of war. In addition, many skillful hands, assisted by nice machinery, worked at the manufacture of uniforms and other military equipment. . . .

He raised his heavy head from the last page. This was as far as he had written; there yet remained much to do. He would not be content, he told himself, merely to write: Captain Zero, 36, teacher,

enlisted at such and such a time, killed in action at such and such a place; or Corporal Cypher, 22, bookbinder, enlisted at such and such a time, died in prison, date unknown; or Private Blank, teamster, aged 38, enlisted at such and such a time, died of typhoid fever at such and such a place. No, he would try to make them live for a little time again on his pages—he would bring them all alive, telling who they were, where they came from, what they worked at, how they fared in the army, what they did when they returned, if they returned—here were the lives, the bones shattered, the blood spilled, the dust dispersed, to be reassembled, rewrought, their life and their faith to be drawn together again as once their life and their faith had drawn them to the point of enlistment, the point of the bayonet, and the point of death. How, he mused, to make their common life live again? How to reveal the richness of their faith, the depth of their common American life? How to make them solid and real again, the homely people, the everyday people, the simple people, wedded to a creed that could never die so long as it gave them and their children and their children's children the fulfillment of the promises it made?

Sighing, he put the manuscript away, rose and unbent his stiff legs, and prepared for bed.

He could not have been sleeping very long when he was awakened by a hand that was timidly shaking his shoulder. "Who?—what?" he mumbled, blinking in the glare of the light.

"It's me, Delia," the maid said. "There's somethin' the matter down in the front hall, Mister John. I thought I better wake you up."

"What are you talking about?" he asked. "What d'you mean?"

"It's Mr. Connell," she said. "I don't know. I heard a noise and looked down over the banister, and Miss Josie's tryin' to help him."

"Godalmighty!" he said to her retreating back. "Whyn't you say so?" He got out of bed, found his slippers, and pulled on his bathrobe, then went quickly out and down the stairs to the front hall.

Francis was slumped down against the wall close to the door, with Josie bending over him, tugging at his arm and whispering sharply: "Francis! Francis! Get up!" She turned her white face towards her father as he came up.

"What's wrong, Josie? Is he hurt?" he panted.

She stepped back from Francis. "He's drunk," she said coldly.

"I'll give you a hand with him," he told her, determined to be matter-of-fact. He bent over Francis, involuntarily wrinkling his nose at the strong reek of whiskey, and tried to slip his arm behind Francis's shoulders.

Francis raised his drooping head and opened his eyes. "Lemme alone, lemme sleep," he said.

"Come on now, Francis. Up with you to bed." He tried again to heave Francis up, but the other's weight was too much for him. "What brought this on?" he said to Josie.

"He's been down to his Ward Club celebrating, giving the soldiers a send-off," she said with such bitterness that he was startled.

Francis was rolling his head from side to side, mumbling disconnectedly. Directly under the glare of the light his face was mottled and puffy, his lower lip hung down wet with spit, and his thin hair was strewn over his head in wisps.

"No need to be so upset, Josie," John Cantrell said. "After all, if a man's celebrating, this could happen."

"Celebratin'," Francis said loudly, "celebratin', thassall."

"Come on, now, Francis, brace up and come upstairs to bed," John said.

"Dowanna go to bed, jus' lemme here to die. Die of a broken heart."

John grinned in spite of himself. "Come on," he said, "die in bed then."

"I'll enlist," Francis said, lifting his head with an effort. "I'll enlist and go t' France with the brave so'diers. I'll die for my country!" His head slumped back on his chest.

"The patriot!" Josie said.

"Don't be so upset, Josie. Godalmighty, you'd think he did this every night in the week!" Her father smiled at her, but he was puzzled by her intent bitter stare.

"Die, thassall," Francis said. "M'wife don' love me any more. . . . I wanna die."

John bent to him again. "Come on now, Francis. Everybody loves you, including your wife, but you've got her all upset sitting here. Let me help you up."

"She don't love me any more," Francis said. "All m'life I loved 'er. Now she hates me."

"Nonsense. Get up now, Francis."

"S'true, I tell you," Francis said. "Look at 'er standin' there, just hatin' me. . . . Wants me to be a hermit, expects me to be an angel."

"For God's sake, Francis, will you cut this nonsense out?" the old man exclaimed. He jerked impatiently at the other's shoulder. "You're making a damn fool of yourself."

"She's doin' it to me," Francis said. "She don't unnerstan' me—I don' unnerstan' her." He grimaced at his father-in-law. "It's your fault, you ol' devil, you made her hate me!"

"He's certainly in fine shape," John said.

"I can't stand any more of this," Josie said. "He can just wallow there for all of me." She turned to go.

Her father seized her arm. "You're talking more nonsense than he is!" he said roughly. "A few drinks—"

She said: "It's not the drinking."

They turned as Francis's heel rattled on the floor, and he lurched to his feet. "See?" he said in bitter sorry triumph, swaying back and forth, "see? What'd I tell you? She hates me because I'm Irish, because I'm a Cath'lic, because I'm a foreigner. I'm wise!" He gestured loosely at John. "It's your fault, old man, it's all your fault."

"He makes me sick," Josie said.

Her father said angrily: "I don't know what you're so bitter

about, Josie, but you'll be calmer in the morning." He guided Francis to the staircase.

"But I love 'er jussa same," Francis said, "I'll never stop lovin' 'er, even if she don't love me." He clutched at the banister. "I love you, Josie, an' don't you ever f'get it. For all the hurt you've done me, I still love you." Pulling himself heavily up the staircase, he began to sing in a wavering tenor voice: "My country, 'tiz o' thee, swee' lan' uh liberry . . . lan' where my fathers died—" He stopped abruptly. "Hates me—thinks I'm a foreigner. Got a different way of lookin' at things." He pulled himself free of John's guiding hand and turned slowly about to look down at Josie standing at the foot of the stairs. Then he smiled foolishly and flung out his hand at John. "An' it's all your fault, old man, it's all your fault she's turned on me," he said, "it's the way you brought 'er up. . . ."

WHEN Phil and Gwen came into the dining-room for breakfast, Annabelle raised her finger warningly to her lips and nodded at Harvey who had been reading aloud to her from the *Chronicle*. Harvey looked up and said: "Good morning," then struck the paper a quick little blow with the back of his open hand, and went on: "The editorial here's worth reading—got the sort of straight talk the country needs these days. Listen to this. . . ." He waited until Phil had hobbled around the table and seated himself, then picked up their glances and read:

"In this unsettled time, the danger to our American heritage is graver than the man on the street suspects. The radical shrewdly plays upon the discontent of the unemployed, the shiftless worker, the dreamy parlor-pink. But the disease must not spread. America today is the greatest and most prosperous nation in the world. It would be the act of a Judas for a workman to betray his country for the seductive and deceiving un-American doctrines whose contagion has already tainted some of our labor unions and whose supporters are now redoubling their efforts to undermine everything the American worker holds dear."

Harvey laid the paper down beside his plate. "About time that Jewett got on to himself," he said. "It's the only decent editorial

he's written in years." He looked across the table at Phil. "It's too bad that so long as you were sent to Russia, you soldiers couldn't have finished them off."

"Why they ever shipped you there, I don't know," Annabelle said. "I thought that you'd be coming home as soon as the Armistice was signed."

Phil did not reply. His head bent over his plate, he was busy cutting into his toast and soaking the pieces in the poached egg.

"Phil," his father said.

Phil raised his head. "Yes?"

"Your mother was talking to you."

"Yes," Annabelle said. "You don't know how I worried about you—no letter, no news at all."

Phil leaned back in his chair. "I was too busy, Mother," he said, "busy looking for my leg, chasing it up and down all the countries of Europe—France, Germany, Finland, Russia. I looked everywhere, but it was gone."

"Phil, please!" She drew back a little from the hard brightness of his glance.

"I wanted to give it a decent burial," Phil said. "But also I thought I might send it to President Wilson. A little souvenir from me to him—a personal souvenir. I would have a silver plaque set in it, and it would read: 'You kept us out of war!'" He lowered his head and grinned mirthlessly at them.

"There's no need for you to be so bitter," his father said. "After all, thousands didn't even come back." He turned towards Gwen. "Don't you agree with me, my dear?"

"I never think about it," Gwen said in her light clear voice. "Phil's the heavy thinker of our family."

Phil leaned across the table towards her. "In you," he said, "I found the choicest flower of American womanhood. For you I fought 'Over There'—Guy Empey and Marshal Joffre and Pershing and me, how we fought to save the American home full of girls like you."

"Yes, I know," Gwen said. "You gave your all."

"Very entertaining, Phil," Harvey said heavily. "But do you suppose, now that you've had your fun with us, do you think you could bring yourself to come to work?"

The look of hard brightness came to Phil's face again. "No," he said, "I could not."

Annabelle interposed. "What are you thinking of, Harvey? The poor boy's hardly been home six months. He's hardly had a chance to pull himself together, to get used to that—that—"

"Artificial leg, it's called, Mother," Phil said.

"—and here you want him to go work in the factory. Why—"

Harvey turned towards her. "Please, Belle, Phil and I must have this out. Let me finish." He said to Phil: "May I ask why not?"

"It's simple," Phil said. "I am not going to work, because I see nothing to work for."

"I know you're bitter, Phil," Harvey said. "Don't think I can't guess what goes on in your mind." God, he thought, it's just the way it always was. I just can't get to him—he slips away from me like water. "But there's help in work, Phil," he said. "I know you're saying to yourself, that's old stuff, but it's true. It'll turn your mind away from yourself."

"I don't want to turn my mind away from myself," Phil said with his quick mirthless grin, his eyes going across the table to his wife who was spooning marmalade onto her plate with a look of composed boredom. "My mind, what there is of it, is dear to me—and I know, though I blush to say it, that I am dear to it."

Harvey said wearily: "Can't you talk sensibly for a minute, Phil? Just what are your plans, or do you expect to go on from day to day in this silly aimless way?"

"Sensibly," Phil said, "I like this aimless way. It doesn't seem silly to me, at all. My war bride likes it, too." But when he looked at Gwen, her expression did not change.

"That sounds so common, Phil," Annabelle said. "I wish you wouldn't use such expressions."

"I can't believe Gwen likes it. No woman likes to see her hus-

band"—Harvey's anger for the first time sharpened his voice—"a spiritless loafer."

He looked at Gwen who said quickly: "But he's not a loafer, Father Cantrell. He's working. He's writing a book, aren't you, Phil, dear?"

Harvey's glance went quickly to his son. "Really, Phil, are you?"

Phil said: "Yes, oh yes, indeed. A sheaf of lyrics about my love for America and hers for me. The theme is deep, tender, and abiding love."

"How lovely, Phil!" his mother said.

"You're pretty smart," Gwen told him.

"My mind is dear to me," he said.

Gwen got up. She said distinctly: "You make me sick. Go on, sit here, Mr. Hamlet, and pity yourself. I'm going out for a walk with the baby."

"In this weather?" Annabelle exclaimed. "Gwen, dear, wait!" She went hastily after her daughter-in-law.

Phil began to rise, but Harvey put out his hand and said almost pleadingly: "Wait a minute, Phil. . . . Just let me have my say."

Phil nodded, his head lowered, his fingers rolling the toast crumbs back and forth along the tablecloth. "If you think it'll do any good," he said.

"Phil," Harvey began slowly, "there's a fight coming up, a more twisted and complicated fight than any you saw in France. I mean it," he said, as he caught Phil's quick look at him. "You and I and thousands of Americans like us have to fight a battle now against something rotten that's seeping into American life, something alien to every tradition this country's got. I'm serious about this, Phil, I'm not just talking. It's a rottenness that's beginning to touch our own security, our own lives. You heard what that editorial had to say, didn't you, about American workers listening to radical doctrines? Well, it's happening today, right in this city, right in our own factories, right in this family's plants."

His son's expression of polite attention did not change. His

fingers still moved among the crumbs.

"For nearly two months now," Harvey went on earnestly, "since September this steel strike, led by radicals, has been crippling industry in the country. And it's reaching out towards us, to cripple us, maybe to ruin us."

Phil lifted his head, and Harvey said: "It sounds wild, doesn't it? But it's true. It's beginning to come to a boil down at the Works. I wish you could see some of the reports I've had. I've got to fight this thing, Phil. Maybe fight in a different way from the way you fought, maybe with less physical danger, but fight just as hard. Believe me, Phil. And I need help. Someone at my right hand, someone I can really trust. Someone from my own family. And I thought, I hoped, now that you've had time to get settled again that you'd come to work with me." Why doesn't he say something, in Heaven's name? he thought. "Phil, are you listening to me?"

"Yes," Phil said, "you've been talking about money, haven't you?"

"No," Harvey said sharply, "I'm not talking about money. I'm talking about work. The satisfaction of work."

"I've got work," Phil said, "work that satisfies me."

"Indeed?" Harvey said. "What, may I ask?"

"Gwen told you. . . . I'm writing."

"Writing poetry?" Harvey said. "I don't see why you couldn't write your poems in your spare time."

"I'll come down to the Works in my spare time," Phil said.

His father got up abruptly. "See how far your poetry would get you if your grandmother hadn't left you the money!"

"It's my money," Phil told him, "and I'll do what I like with it, I think."

"Not while you're living in my house," Harvey said.

Phil set his hands on the edge of the table and pulled himself up. "I'll find another place to live," he said.

Harvey's face flushed, he growled in his throat, glaring at his son, then turned and went out.

Phil looked after him with a vague smile of pleasure. "Good morning, Mr. Zip-Zip-Zip," he hummed, turning the words lightly on his lips, "Good morning, Mr. Zip-Zip-Zip."

As the car whirled out of the driveway into the glittering snow, Harvey thought bitterly: All right, let him be a poet if he wanted to be—let him dream his life away. If only, though, he were not such a play-actor, posing all the time, trying to be clever, mocking them all secretly. As if he had been the only one who'd gone to France, as if he was the only one who had fought. He, Harvey, had done his share too—had given his time and his strength, his ingenuity and his experience to meeting the demands for munitions and machines and power and money.

The car slowed at the intersection of East Main and Hamblin Streets while the trolley snowplow went by, and he glanced impatiently at his watch. Looking south towards the Flats, he could see the cloud of gray-black smoke that went straight up into the sky from the stacks of the Iron Works. Maybe it was just as well, he thought more calmly, that he had not persuaded moody Phil to come to work for him. There was a fight coming up, a more twisted fight, as he had told Phil, than Phil had ever seen.

The car moved swiftly forward again over the muddy snow. Yes, there was a battle to be fought, and he had to win it. A man did not have to be a soldier to figure out the need of a plan of action, a campaign before the enemy had fully shown himself. He would strike first, he had to strike first. No alien scum would have a chance to unionize the Works, to tell him how to run his business, to rob him and the stockholders and the American workers of what was rightfully theirs—theirs by the enterprise, theirs by the faith, theirs by the promises of America. "We don't have to eat dirt," he said to himself, watching the stacks climbing up into the sky, "there's nothing in the Constitution says we have to eat dirt." Yes, he decided, as the car pulled up in front of the factory, he would plan a campaign. He had waited too long already. The first thing to do was to get in touch with Francis Connell.

FURTIVELY her father watched Josie's face while she stared into the fire. He was figuring her age—not even forty, he told himself, and she looks ten years older. Something had to be done about her and Francis. It was more than two years now, in the spring it would be three, that their marriage had been cut apart, almost, he mused, as if someone had taken a knife and with one stroke had slashed through all the threads that had woven them together. Their wretchedness hung in the house like a heavy mist through which they all groped their way. Even young Tommy could feel it, or would be old enough very soon to feel it. It'll do the boy a hurt, he thought, a bad hurt the day he finds out. But maybe before that day, somehow a way could be found to reconcile Francis and Josie.

At first he had been bewildered by their break. For a time he had been foolish enough to think that Francis's coming home drunk had split them apart, because Francis had not been a very pretty sight. But that was not it. That could not have been it because Josie had too much sense, he realized later, when the weeks and the months had gone by and he saw that they were still eating their hearts out. He had dared at length to ask Francis what the trouble was, and Francis had told him. Harvey! What could she know of Harvey's doings? Of Francis's business with Harvey? And Francis had told him that she knew everything because he himself had told her, had bragged to her of this triumph and that success without knowing that nearly every word he spoke had cut another thread between them so that they had never really grown together in their marriage. As soon as one thread was tied, another was broken, and pretty soon the threads broke faster than they could be retied. That was how he had figured it out from what Francis, speaking in a low voice, his head lowered, had told him.

Now, watching her face closed in sombreness, he thought: Something's got to be done. I've got to try again before it kills them both.

"Josie?" he said.

"Yes, Father?"

"You and Francis," he murmured, "can't you—there must be some way."

"Didn't we agree last time you mentioned it not to discuss it ever again?" she said strongly. "Didn't we?"

"But, Josie, I can't help it. I have to. You've got to settle this somehow."

She turned abruptly in her chair towards him. "Francis can settle it any time," she said.

He realized that she would listen to him. It's wearing her down, he told himself quickly. If only I. . . . "Aren't you being too hard about it?" he said to her. "Maybe you really don't understand. . . . And Francis looks bad."

"I can't help it, Father," she told him.

"But, Josie," he said in some exasperation, "there's two sides to everything. . . . And it's not your business what he does."

"Not my business!" she said. "If my husband were a thief, a confidence man, wouldn't it be my business? Francis's life and mine are tied together, and his business, his life are mine, too."

"But you're hurting Francis—hurting him bad, Josie. It shows more and more every day in his eyes, on his face."

"I know," she said sadly. "I don't want to hurt him. But I know that if I close my eyes to what's between us, I'd do myself a greater hurt than anything I've done or could do to him."

"Francis was right," he said slowly. "It's my fault. I was the one who brought you up to feel like this."

Her voice sharpened. "It's nothing to be sorry for. And it wasn't you alone even though I feel the same way about things that you do. The way that makes you write on your history as if some people would care. Well, some have to care. This country, this city, this house . . . we owe them something. The things that made them—justice, honor, true pride—are the things that've made us. And there's no halfway. Either we stand by them, or we don't. And if we don't, it's a death of the spirit."

"But if we do, Josie?"

"Yes, I know," she said. "Sometimes people get hurt, even die for what they think is right. But better the death of the body than the death of the spirit."

"Francis thinks he's right," her father said quickly.

"Francis knows he's wrong!" she exclaimed. "What he doesn't know is that if he keeps on with Harvey, he'll die from the inside. He'll wither away till there'll be nothing left of him but a money-grubbing animal coming home here to his burrow."

"You're crazy, Josie!"

"Look at Harvey," she replied, "and then tell me I'm crazy. He was a man once."

He was silent a moment. Then he said weakly: "You've got no right to pass judgment on a man."

"I've got every right to pass judgment on myself," she said.

The fire veered and lifted, and they heard the wind pawing at the house.

"Paper says more snow for tonight," he said.

She laughed sombrely. "All right," she said, "we'll talk about something else. The weather, if you like."

"I don't like to see you getting bitter, Josie," he told her after a little time. "The wine of righteousness can turn awfully sour."

"Yes," she said. "I know. You think I'm smug and self-righteous. Maybe even a humbug, too."

"I think nothing like that," he said swiftly. "But I believe in being kind."

"You want me to kill Francis's spirit with kindness? Is that it?"

"Better than the way you're killing him now!"

"And what would I be doing to myself? Tell me that," she answered. "We're back where we started, Father." She looked into the fire. "Maybe I should've stayed an old maid."

"You'd have had only half a life, Josie."

"Yes," she nodded. "You told me that once before, I remember."

Stubbornly he returned to the attack. "And Francis—he wants to live a full life too."

She made an impatient gesture. "Full of the wrong things!" She said broodingly: "He's brought a taint into this house that should never have come into it."

"That's crazy pride, Josie."

"Oh, I don't mean that," she said. "It's not family and old furniture that I'm talking of. No, nothing like that. It goes back to what I said before about honor." She lifted her gaze from the fire and said rapidly: "You've seen the men he's had here—his wardheelers, his political jacks. You know what they're like—with their shifty eyes and their hearty voices, their red faces like foxes, their brown faces like rats, their thin faces like weasels. And he's the leader of the pack, Francis is. That is, until Harvey Cantrell whips him into line to do his dirty work."

He turned abruptly towards her. His fingers under his coat rubbed slowly at the stump of his left arm that ached all through the winter. "Josie, where's your common sense for you to be talking this way about Francis and the others? They're not animals. They're human beings with human failings, and in the whole sum of things, their humanity outshines the animal in them." He leaned forward to her. "You keep on thinking this way, Josie, and before you know it, the whole human race will be a stench in your nostrils. You'll hate yourself for belonging to it. . . . After all, Francis believes in what he's doing. His nature draws him to the work he does. I've done mine, and mine hasn't always been good the way you see things." He hesitated and then went on firmly: "The Bank—in 1907 when things looked so bad, I thought to myself: 'It's my fault. I backed Harvey up, I persuaded Will to it when we borrowed the Bank's money. I took the gamble, and I'm to blame.' But I did it, Josie, because it bespoke my faith in the progress of the city, the country. I had to do it. And yet think of the hurt I'd have done people and myself—my name would've been a swindler's name today—if the Bank hadn't pulled through. . . . Josie, you've got to see how narrow sometimes the edge is between right and wrong before you judge people."

He waited for her to speak, but her face was turned away. "You've never had to fight your way in the world as Francis has," he said earnestly. "Yet you've judged and condemned him. You've kicked the props out from under him so that he looks and acts like a sick man. But he's a good man, a kind man. You know that. Godalmighty, you can't expect a man to be a saint, an angel!"

She twisted towards him. "To be kind is not enough," she said sharply. "Even an imbecile can be kind. Life's not living blind, blaming destiny or chance for what happens, and then moaning: 'I meant well.' That's a weakling's way of talking. Yes, it is, and I've heard it from Francis already. If he says that destiny runs his life, it's because such a notion gives him a license to wallow through the muck for Harvey's money." She turned her face towards him. "I love Francis, love him more than he or you know. But I'm not blind, and I won't blind myself." She got to her feet, with the firelight shining in her eyes. "That's what it comes down to. I'm sorry, Father. Good-night," she said.

"Good-night, Josie," he said moodily.

He sat for a little while and then went slowly up the stairs. "Getting old," he said to himself, feeling the drag of his feet on the stairs, feeling tonight the heavy weight of his years bowing his shoulders and imagining as he passed Josie's room that he heard her muffled sobbing. "Getting old," he said to himself in his room, "have to hurry up and finish it before I die," and drew his manuscript out of the drawer and laid it on the desk. He had finished his account of all the regiments, their campaigns, their battles—there remained yet to be written the list of the missing, the wounded, the dead and the living. He had yet to write what the living had made of their lives when they returned from the war, and what the country had made of them who had fought in their faith for her. And to put Francis and Josie out of his mind, he began to read over what he had last written while the snow souged against the windows and the wind nosed stubbornly against the house.

"I SWEAR, Lily, may God strike me dead if this time I don't make a killin'! I'll make a champ outa this nigger that'll make Jack Johnson look like a bum," Smitty said. They were sitting on a bench in the park in the lee of the bandstand. "He's strong as a bull. All he needs is a little trainin'—that's all."

She looked fearfully down the path where their steps had broken the crusted surface of the snow. "If Paul knew I was meetin' you, he'd kill me," she said. "What you want me to do now?"

"I been tellin' you, Lily. Jus' get me a little more dough, a few bucks to work with. I have to pay the gym, don't I? The nigger can't keep workin' out there for nothin'. Lily, you gotta help me." He put his arm across her shoulders.

She looked at his face mournful with the weight of anxiety. "How'm I gonna do it?" she said. "How c'n I get hold of more money?"

He seized her hand. "Lily, there ain't another dame in the world like you! You get me the dough, and you know what I'm gonna do? I'm gonna give you a piece of the nigger."

She laughed. "A piece of him?"

He said: "I mean you're gonna be partners, managin' him with me, see? I get a split on every fight, so I'll cut you in for five, maybe ten percent, dependin' on how much dough you can get me."

"I a'ready gave you more than two hundred," she said.

"Jes's, Lily, don't start throwin' that up to me! A man's gotta live, don't he?"

"I saved that money by myself," she said, "but I ain't got any more than that."

"What I like about you, Lily," he said, "is you're still a small-town babe. Some day I'll show you Broadway, some day you and me, we'll burn the Big Town up. But I gotta wise you up so's the fellers I know won't be givin' you the ol' horse laugh when we meet 'em."

"I'm as good as they are any day!" She craned her neck to look up the path.

"Sure you are, baby," he soothed her, "sure you are. Better'n

they are any day." He lowered his voice and leaned forward. "You got a cash register in the place, haven't you? I mean he don't make change outa his pants pocket, does he?"

"So what?" She stared at him.

"It's easy, baby," he said. "Don't you get it? When he steps out once in a while, all you gotta do is tap the old till, get me?"

"Tap the till?"

"Sure," he said loudly. He squeezed her shoulders, leaning forward to say into the soft coil of gold around her ear: "Sure, knock off a few bucks—say, four, five a day. He'll never miss it."

She twisted to face him. "You mean steal it from the register!"

A swell babe, but dumb as the day she was born, he told himself. He laughed. "Not stealin', Lily—just borrowin', that's all." He saw her face stiffen. "Jes's, Lily, don't say 'no' to me now. It'd kill me. Here I got a big chance. Big, I mean. I been waitin' for it all my life."

When she tried to speak he stopped her. "If I could get a steady job in this Godforsaken tank-town, it'd be different. But Jes's, you know's well as me there ain't no jobs to be had for love or money. I been all over. Even them soldiers, the boys back from France, can't get a thing. Can't even make themselves coffee money. I was talkin' to a couple down to the gym the other day. . . . So what c'n I do? I'm askin' you, Lily." His lips quivered. "Jes's, Lily, you know what you did to me once? You made a jailbird outa me. You ruined me in this town. Am I lyin'? It's true, ain't it? You and the Turk got married. It should of been you and me. Yeah, you know it. We could of been lovey-dovey in our own little place now instead of sittin' out on a park bench in the cold. Jes's, Lily, I'll be sleepin' on this bench t'night if you don't gimme a hand." He brushed his free hand across his eyes: "Jes's, you got me cryin'," letting her see the film of tears. "You'd think I was a bum," he said, "you'd think I was a lousy hobo or Bullshevik or somethin'. But, Lily, I got ideas, big ideas. Ideas for the big dough, the easy money. For both of us. You think I want it for myself?"

Jes's, Lily, I been crazy about you from the day I met you. Ain't it so? Ain't it?"

She nodded.

"I could of got married a hundred times while I was away—swell-lookers, dames with dough. Say, there was a widow in Philly was crazy about me. But, Lily, I was thinkin' of you all the time. All the time. You ruined me, you had me kicked outa my job, outa the town, you married a greasy Turk, and I been wanderin' aroun' the country thinkin' of you night 'n' day. When the goin' was tough, I thought of you, Lily. And I came back after all these years to you, baby. Just to you. Lily, for God's sake," he pleaded into her silence, "will you get me the dough?"

She said slowly: "All right, Jack. I'll try, but suppose—"

"You'll do it? You'll gimme a break? We'll be partners, hey, kid?"

She nodded. He pulled her close and kissed her flushed face.

"You're gonna take me away with you?" she murmured, her arms around him. "You promise?"

"May I drop dead right here an' now if I don't!"

"I'll meet you t'morra same time, right here," she told him.

"Jes's, Lily, you're a wonder, you're a peacherino!" He stood up.

"Listen, go the other way," she said. "If Paul should . . ."

"Don't worry," he said. "That baby loves the kale too much to leave the store to look for you."

"Just the same," she said, "I don't wanna get murdered."

He laughed. "Don't worry. If he lays a finger on you, I'll have the nigger-boy tear him apart."

"Paul's not so bad," she said.

Hastily he said: "Sure, I know it. He oughta be in the booby-hatch not to be good to a swell kid like you." He kissed her again. "Tomorra," he said, and went off down the path towards the gates. "Easy dough, big dough. This is the break. Smitty, if you muff this, you oughta be shot." He ran to make the trolley coming down Hamblin Street.

When he came into the junkyard, he saw the nigger and a white

boy unloading a truck. He watched for a moment the easy way in which Indie swung the chunks of rusted metal to the ground, thinking: Jes's, what a giant! What a build! exulting that Indie was his, that there was a gold mine in the muscles under the smooth dark skin. He walked up to the tail of the truck. "Hey, Frank, lemme talk to you f'r a minute, will you?"

Indie looked down at him. "Didn't I tell you never to come 'round on the job? Git!" He turned back to his work.

"F' God's sake, Frankie, someone'd think I was here sellin' peanuts instead of bein' your manager. It's important."

Indie looked down at the pale puffy face turned up towards him, at the narrow green eyes that pleaded, yet hated at the same time. Yuh, a wise guy, he thought, a wise guy who thinks he's gonna make me work for him.

"Tell me quick then," he said.

"Listen, Frankie boy, it's fixed. I'm goin' downtown to see Feeney at the gym."

"You better," Indie said. "He was tellin' me last night he's gettin' kind of tired waitin' for his money."

Jack pulled out the packet of bills Lily had given him. "What's that look like?" he asked. "Came f'om my Chicago bank this mornin'!"

"Where'd you get it?" Indie said.

"I just told you! F'om my bank in Chi."

"Sure," Indie said. "Boy, you got all of ten dollars there."

"Listen, Frankie, will you cut out the kiddin'? What you gonna do now? Gimme the double cross?"

"Don't talk like that to me," Indie said, "or I'll give you more'n the double cross."

"F' God's sake, Frank, what's the matter with you? Here I'm tryin' to get you outa this lousy dirty dump"—he waved his hand at the heaps of junk strewn over the ground—"an' you're givin' me an argument. Will you get down off that truck and come down where we c'n talk? Or do I have t'let every jughead around here know our business?" He nodded to the white boy who had

been listening with unashamed interest and who now said: "Ah, screw you!"

Indie laughed, and jumped to the ground and walked off a way with Smitty.

"It's like I said, it's all fixed," Smitty told him. "You're gonna have your first fight next week. And f'God's sake, will you remember what Feeney told you about not droppin' your guard after you lead, or the first thing you know you'll be flat on your back listenin' to the birdies."

"Don't worry 'bout me," Indie said. His voice changed. "Now we'll go see a lawyer 'bout a contract, huh?"

Jack whirled around. "What're you talkin' about? You nuts?"

"Don't get excited, Mister," Indie said. "We're gonna go see a lawyer, or I don't fight."

"Jes's, a fine way to start!—a lawyer! Here I'm payin' your expenses, we got everythin' fixed up, and you want to go spend money on a lawyer and get us both tangled up. Listen, Frank, lawyers are poison!" He shuddered, and pulled his coat close about him.

"We gotta see a lawyer to make the contract good. That's what Mr. Bandler tol' me," Indie said. "An' that's what we're gonna do."

"Oh! I get it—the Jew told you! Goddam Jew bastard, what's he—?"

He got no further. Indie's hard hands were around his throat, he felt himself whirled off the ground and fell heavily on his back. Looking up, he saw the black face savage with rage, the large white eyeballs bulging with murder. He fumbled at Indie's hands and tried to speak, but only a thin croak came from his dry mouth.

Indie said: "Listen to me, Mister. Listen good. You listenin'?" He loosened his grip a little.

When Smitty nodded, he could not stop. His head kept shaking back and forth in an involuntary spasm.

"Good! You keep on sayin' 'yes' to me, you're gonna live a long time, Mister. Now listen good: If you say one word more—just one word—against Mr. Bandler, you know what I'm gonna

do?" He grunted deep in his throat. "I'm gonna take your neck in my two han's just like this"—Smitty's fingers fluttered helplessly at the wrists rigid as iron—"an' squeeze till I bust your neck-bone." He bumped Jack's head gently against the muddy ice. "You heah me? You listenin'?" He stared down at the face beneath him, and saw a faint blue tinge creeping up under the sallow skin. He got up then, and after a moment reached down and pulled Jack to his feet. "Now let's go see a lawyer. Mr. Bandler told me where to go—best lawyer in this whole city. I got his name on a piece of paper right here in my pocket. Okay?" he asked brightly of Smitty who walked beside him, his hand gently palpating his throat. Smitty nodded, and Indie said: "That's right, that's fine. . . . Let's hurry up and catch the ol' trolley."

Francis Connell's offices were in the Crandall Building, and as they paused outside the frosted-glass door, Jack made a last attempt to hold Indie back. "You're askin' for it," he said sulkily, nodding towards the door, "so you have to pay 'em for it."

Indie said: "You're my manager, ain't you? You tol' me you're takin' care of expenses. But the lawyer man'll tell us who's gonna pay. . . . Come on. I gotta be gettin' back to the job."

They went inside.

The girl at the desk said, "Yes?" not getting up from her little desk, her fingers poised on the keys of the typewriter.

"Git us a lawyer, please," Indie said.

She got up quickly and went out of the door behind her. "Mr. Mundy will see you," she said when she came back. "Last door on the left."

They told Eddie Mundy what they wanted while he sat and made little notes on the pad in front of him, and said finally: "You come back in a couple of days, say Friday, and I'll have the papers all ready for you to sign." He turned toward Indie. "You a stranger in town? I mean I go down to the Washington A. C. once in a while to see the fights, but I've never seen you before."

"Me—a stranger? Say," Indie told him, "I hardly ever been outa this town. I lived here all my life except when I was in Camp Dix in

the army. I ain't had a fight yet, but I'm gonna have one soon. Yuh, my manager here, Mr. Smith, he says I'm nearly ready."

Eddie laughed. "Don't begin before you're ready," he said, "or you'll run into trouble."

"I ain't worried. I c'n take care of myself," Indie replied. He liked Eddie's serious thin face and the cool gray eyes that looked so absent, and yet, Indie felt, had taken both him and Smitty in, had weighed them and thought he knew what they were. He thinks he knows me, Indie thought, thinks he knows all about me—big stupid buck nigger wants to be a box-fighter, wants money for gin and for girls. He leaned forward and said again: "I c'n take care of myself, Mister," and for a moment the gray eyes against his seemed to unlock, and Indie felt their icy look matching the smouldering purpose of his.

Eddie said, dropping his eyes: "Then you'll be all right, I guess."

"You, too," Indie said to himself.

Outside, while they were waiting for the elevator to come up, Indie suddenly turned and started back towards the frosted-glass door.

"Where you goin'?" Smitty said. "What kinda fancy idea you got now?" thinking he'd like to push the black bastard down the elevator shaft, hoping he'd get run over by an automobile, praying that a piece of junk, an iron bar or something, would drop on his head at the junkyard and split his head open, telling himself: "I'll get you, you black bastard, layin' your hands on a white man. I'll twist your heart out before I finish with you," enjoying the rank taste of his hate. "I'll make my pile outa you, and throw you back in the junkyard, dirty black, stinkin' black, filthy black nigger, I'll take care of you, I'll handle you."

Indie said: "I gotta see him on private business, I forgot somep'n."

Smitty started towards him. "Don't you—" he began, but Indie said: "I tol' you it was private, nothin' to do with me and you. . . . Go on 'bout your business, Mister Manager. You're supposed to see about makin' some money for us."

The elevator door clanged open. Indie gave him a little push

towards it, and then turned back down the corridor.

"You ever do any land buying, Mister?" he said to Eddie Mundy. "I mean, could you tell me how I c'n buy an island?" Eddie stared up at him, and Indie said in a low voice: "It's not a joke, I mean it."

"An island?—you mean for a training camp or something like that?" Eddie asked him.

"Yuh," Indie said, "that's what I mean—for a trainin' camp."

"What you want to see is a real estate man," Eddie said, smiling. "Listen, it's none of my business maybe, Mr. Whipple, but there's no islands around here—not within hundreds of miles that I know of. Except maybe down the river where it widens out, you might find a little one."

"No, that's not the kind I want," Indie said. "I thought maybe . . ." He told Eddie finally that what he was thinking of was an island in the ocean somewhere, but he looked so strange while he was telling him, that Eddie thought he was joking.

"You really mean it—an island somewhere out in the ocean?" he asked. Indie nodded, and Eddie got up from his chair. "Look, I'll get a New York directory and find the name of some big dealer in New York. I don't know, maybe he could do something for you. Why not? An island's a piece of real property like any other piece of land."

"Sure," Indie said, "sure it is. Just like any other piece of land."

When Eddie came back, he gave Indie a piece of paper with some addresses neatly typed on it. "There's half a dozen names," he said, "big dealers. You could write to them direct, or say—I could write for you if you want me to handle the business for you."

"No," Indie said, "not yet. I'm not ready yet. I got to make a few dollars box-fightin' before I talk business. I was just askin' that's all."

"Come to see me when you're ready then," Eddie said. "Maybe I can help you." He shook hands with Indie, aware of the hard curve of the fingers on his soft hand and the weight of the arm as Indie returned his clasp.

"Thanks," Indie said, "thanks, Mister. . . . I'll be back," and went out.

When the elevator came up, someone got out who looked familiar to him. He did not speak, but the other, going by, stopped short and said: "Indie Whipple, ain't it?"

"Yuh," said Indie, remembering, "and I remember you, too—Amby Tait."

They shook hands, and Amby said: "What you doin' with yourself, Indie? I ain't seen you in years." He looked troubled and nervous, tapping his fingers of one hand against the palm of the other as they talked.

"Still workin' for Mr. Bandler, the junkman," Indie said.

Amby interrupted him. "Say, I hear you're gonna be a fighter. You know who told me? Joe Cascione. Yeh, Joe told me. . . . I met him down at a speakeasy one night, and we hoisted a few, and he told me you're gonna be a prizefighter."

"I'm thinkin' of it," Indie said. "Watch out for me in the papers."

"Sure, sure," Amby said. He lighted a cigarette with a quick movement. "Joe and me were talkin' about the good ol' days, that's how he came to mention you . . . Jes's it was great. Swimmin' out the river, and hookin' apples outa the orchards, and pickin' blueberries. An' Fourtha Julys. . . . Remember the fun Fourtha Julys? Remember the time we scared the kid almost outa his pants and Joe and Al Schaeffer hadda fight? Remember? I remember because that was the day my sister Annie said she was gonna be a nun. Jes's, was my old lady excited! . . . An' the parades, the Fourtha July parades. . . . They don't have 'em any more the way they useta. They ain't got the ol' feelin', the ol' excitement. Jes's, nowadays everybody's in a hurry, there's no time to take things easy, everybody's runnin' around like a crazy man, things goin' around and around like a merry-go-round. Sometimes I get a headache thinkin' of it," and he pressed his hands to his forehead and took them quickly down again. His light swift voice went on. "Yeh, always in a hurry," he said, and then, "What?" as Indie spoke. "Yeh," the light voice went on, hurrying quickly, lightly over its words: "I was in France with the boys. Right up in the

front line, too. . . . I wouldn't do it again. Not for a million bucks."

"You weren't hurt—or anything?" Indie asked. "I mean—"

Rapidly Amby said: "No, nothin' to speak of. . . . I got gassed. All my hair fell out. Look."

He took his hat off, and Indie saw that he was completely bald. "For God's sake, Amby!" he said, falling back a step, his eyes rounding.

"Don't mean a thing," Amby said, "not a thing. Don't bother me a bit. The fortunes of war, as my old man used to say, the fortunes of war. Lucky it wasn't worse." His light blue eyes darted and shone as he talked. He kept craning his neck, looking up and down the corridor, and Indie began to feel uneasy, a little afraid.

"How's your folks, Amby?" he asked, wondering why the elevator didn't come.

"My old lady's fine," Amby said. "My old man's dead, y'know." He clicked his tongue. "I was gonna work for him. He was gonna send me to college, I was gonna be a civil engineer or somethin', but I don't know why, things went bad with him in business, he couldn't do it. He worked himself to death. Just a tough break, that's all. I'm not complainin', what's the good of it? You gotta take things in your stride, hey, Indie, ol' kid?" He took breath and went on: "Boy, you're lookin' great, you're sure in the pink. You'll be another Jack Johnson." His rapid voice stopped. He looked around as if he heard his name called. Then he said: "Well, Indie, ol' kid, I'll be a seein' you sometimes, hey? I'll come down and see you fight."

"Yuh, do that," Indie said, stepping back and pressing his finger long and hard against the elevator button.

"Sure, I will, Indie, sure. I'm sorry I have to beat it now. I got a very important appointment. Got a nice job comin' up. Yeh, a nice job. The Councilman's gonna fix me up." He threw down his cigarette.

Behind him Indie heard the whine of the elevator. Hurry up, for God's sake, he thought.

Then he was holding Amby's light cool fingers in his for a moment, and Amby was going down the corridor, saying over his shoulder while Indie stared after him: "Sorry, Indie, I have to hurry. . . . Sorry. . . . Look me up sometime. We'll chew the rag," while Indie nodded his head between each phrase, nodding while Amby threw his words back until the elevator door opened.

Inside the elevator he pulled out a handkerchief and swabbed his sweating face with it.

"I guess this cold weather don't bother you none, hey, big boy?" the elevator man said. His small wrinkled face turned back to regard Indie curiously.

"They overheat these buildin's," Indie said. Poor Amby, he was thinking, poor, poor Amby. And he was glad, suddenly he was thankful that he hadn't gone to France, that he'd done nothing better than K.P. in the army. Good old Camp Dix, he thought, putting away his handkerchief after wiping his hot palms. He got out of the elevator, and hurried out to the cold touch of the wind.

AMBY handed Francis Connell the note from Father Regan and sat down. He don't look like such a big shot to me, he thought, watching Connell's face, seeing the dark pouches under the dull eyes, the deep lines on the pale forehead from which the sparse hair receded, the skin of the scalp showing through.

Connell looked up at him. "Father Regan speaks very highly of you. Very highly, and I'm going to do the best I can for you." He smiled. "It's good to see someone for a change who has less hair than I have."

"Yeh," Amby said, "it all fell out." He tapped nervously on the edge of the desk.

Connell hitched his chair forward. "I can put you to work right away, I think," he said slowly, "if you can take orders."

"I c'n take orders," Amby said. "I took 'em in the army."

"Yes, Father Regan mentions here that you're a veteran. Now . . ." He began to ask Amby questions, making an occasional note.

When he asked Amby what his father did for a living, Amby said: "He's dead—died in 1911. He had a small contractin' business. I remember when I was a kid, he said you were gonna help him get some business, or somethin'."

"Say, I remember him! Sure, Mike Tait—a big handsome Mick he was, had a great gift of gab, great sense of humor. Sure, I remember." He looked at Amby's spare figure, the small triangular face, with the neat little nose. "You don't take much after him, hey?"

"No," Amby said. "I'm more like my old lady, I guess."

"I sort of lost sight of your father after the plant was finished," said Francis. "But I remember many was the good laugh we had together. Did he die sudden like?"

"Yeah," Amby said in a flat colorless voice, "he had a shock. I went up to call him for breakfast like I always did—he hated to get up in the mornin'—and I found him."

"Tough." Connell clicked his tongue sympathetically.

I found him, Amby remembered, I found him. I found him lying on his side on the floor with his arms stretched straight out in front of him, the way a dead cat or a dead dog looks lying in the street. I remember. That was the year business was so tough. That was the year they couldn't get any jobs to do, no jobs at all. That was the year the bank took over the tools and supplies and sold them at auction. That was the year we sold the house and moved down near the Flats. The year Ma nearly went crazy.

"You and your mother the only ones left?" Connell asked.

"I got a sister named Annie, she's a nun down at St. Anne's hospital in Stanton," Amby said. That was the year he graduated from high school, the year he was going to enter college, the year he had the long talks with the principal, old man Matthews, about the best college to go to. That was the year his father said: "Amby, boy, it hasn't worked. There's been a curse on me ever since I started in for myself. It's licked I am, Amby. Curse me for a blunderin' fool. Thought I was as smart as the next one, thought I'd make my million before I died, thought I'd be riding your mother in a limousine with a big black shofer to take her wherever she wanted to

go, thought I'd be sendin' you to college, thought"—grinding his teeth together in bitterness—"you and me'd be in business together: Michael Tait and Son, General Contractors. Agh! I'm a failure, Amby—I know it, your sainted mother knows it, you might as well know it too." That was the year he started boozing, coming home so drunk he couldn't climb the stairs, and Amby and his mother had to haul him up the three flights, the stink of the cheap booze coming off his clothes and out of his gaping mouth, with the neighbors' doors softly opening and closing, their whispering and giggling seeping out into the dim stairwell while his father's stuporous breathing hissed sharp in Amby's ear and he and his mother staggered on the stairs with the weight of the sodden body between them, his mother, tight-lipped, muttering: "Mike, Mike! What have ye done to yourself—to us? What've ye done?" and murmuring: "Amby, gently. . . . Amby, gently."

"And how've you been keeping yourselves?" Connell asked.

"His insurance money," Amby replied. "We lived off the insurance. An' I worked in the shippin' room of the Happy Times Candy place. An' my old lady got my compensation for the duration." He blinked rapidly. That was the year, he remembered, that was the year I was eighteen years old. That was the year when after the funeral I stopped going to church, started fighting with the old lady. That was the year I didn't give a good Goddam for anybody or anything, started hanging around the poolroom, the barroom, the whorehouse. I don't know why, I didn't even care for the old lady any more. It was like I died when the old man died. I didn't wake up till the war came. Yes, I remember. I remember when I went upstairs and found him.

"Have you had any work at all since you got back from France?"

"Yeah, I drove a delivery truck for Schaeffer's when their regular guy got sick with appendicitis. My ol' buddy, Al Schaeffer, gave me the job."

Connell started to write, but hesitated. "Drove delivery truck," he wrote finally, and tapped the pencil against his teeth.

I found him, Amby remembered, I found him stiff on the floor. It was lucky I didn't yell for Ma right away. It was lucky I saw the shine of the little bottle in his fingers. Yes, I remember. It was lucky nobody else saw the little bottle that said: POISON—ARSENIC—POISON on the label. It was all very lucky. Suppose I had not seen the bottle? Suppose. Suppose the doctor had found out it was poison killed him? He killed himself with. This is very simple. Then he would not have been buried in hallowed ground. Not in the Cemetery of Our Lady of Sorrow. Suppose where then? In a dump? In the river? Burned to ashes and thrown away? Chopped to pieces? Torn to bits? Blown to hell? Sure, like the guys in the ditch near Soissons. Nobody knows, only me. I know. I remember. "Death due to natural causes," the old doc said. Okay. If that's what the doc says, okay. Okay then. Death due to natural causes. It was not from taking POISON—ARSENIC—POISON. Suppose it was not from poison. That's all. Nobody knows but me. Suppose it was from natural causes. Suppose it was from losing his business, his money, his wife's faith, his son's trust, his own heart's hope. Suppose it was from natural causes, such as: 1, Despair; 2, Bitterness; 3, Anguish; 4, Self-contempt; 5, Contempt of life. All right then. Not from POISON—ARSENIC—POISON. But from natural causes. Sure, from natural causes.

Connell said as Amby kept nodding his head: ". . . so looks like a good chance for you. Now listen carefully to what I say."

Amby pulled himself up in the chair, he crossed his legs, and began to swing his foot back and forth, back and forth.

"You go down to the Cantrell Iron Works and ask for Mr. Trumbull. He'll put you to work somewhere in the shop. Mind you, you're to do a good day's work, Tait."

Amby nodded at him. It seemed to him it was time to go, and he rose quickly to say thanks and good-by, but Connell, also rising, faced him, leaning across the desk, and said: "You'll get good money, but it won't all be for what you do at a machine."

"No?"

"No. Listen—this is a job of trust you're getting. This is really a soldier's job." Amby's fingers crawled on the desk. He looked curiously at Connell, who said again: "Yes, a soldier's job, Tait. . . . You knew what it means to fight for your country when you fought in France, didn't you? Well, the fight still goes on. The battleground's different, that's all."

"I don't get it," Amby said, "I mean . . ."

Connell stopped him. "Wait'll I finish," he said impatiently. He went on at once. "There's a lot of radicals in this country out to wreck America if they can. They make a mockery of religion, a mockery of democratic institutions. I don't have to tell you what they've done in Russia. If you read the newspapers at all, you know what they're trying to do over here."

Amby ran his hand over his smooth skull. "Yeah, I know," he said.

Francis went on slowly: "And these wreckers—you know who they are, don't you? Most of them are aliens, not even citizens. And those that are, are traitors, traitors to the country that gives them their freedom, traitors to the country that even gives them the right of free speech to attack our country."

"What's it got to do with me?" Amby broke in. He looked around as if someone were calling him, had just called his name.

"I'm getting to that," Connell said. "There's been trouble down at the Iron Works. There're men working there who're working just to make trouble. They don't give a damn about their work, about making an honest dollar, of getting somewhere by hard work and initiative in the good old American way—no, all they care about is wrecking, infecting other workers with their slick talk about One Big Union. And some of the others are cheap grafters, out to get fat union jobs and ride in limousines out of the graft they get from union dues. And the mere fact that it's secret stuff, that nobody knows who they are proves it."

"My father was a union man," Amby said suddenly.

"Ah, that's different—what're you trying to give me, boy? Your

father belonged to a union run by and for Americans, intelligent skilled American workers. You ought to be ashamed to make the comparison." He paused, and the lines of his forehead deepened into a scowl. "If you don't want this job, just say so. There's plenty of others, I don't have to beg you."

"What do I have to do?" Amby asked. "I mean—"

"That's more like it," Connell said. "That's soldier talk. That's what I like. . . . What do I want you to do? I want you to get a line on who these wreckers are. I want you to find out how far this undercover stuff has gone, how many of the men have been taken in by it—find out if they've got any kind of an organization, if they pay dues, if they have meetings. And I want you to report."

"To you?"

"No, not to me. You report to the young feller outside. His name is Mundy. He's a good lad, real old American stock, his father used to own a big farm out Williston way. . . . You don't have to write anything down. Just come in and talk to him about conditions as you find them." He stopped and looked straight into Amby's restless eyes. "Well, you want the job or not?" he asked brusquely. "And remember everything is confidential—nothing you say, or I say, or Mundy says, goes beyond any one of us."

"But why me?" Amby said. "I never had experience in a job like this."

"Doesn't matter," Connell said quickly. "All the better. We want people from this city. Strangers would get nowhere. But you're a local boy, you been in France. And remember this: you're a soldier of industry now, American industry. You're still fighting for the American way of doing things and for American beliefs. Even if you find a friend who's deceived by the hot air and deadly poison that's being handed out to him, it's your duty as an American to report him. Love of country and love of God are something more than mere friendship."

"Okay," Amby said.

"It's a bargain then." Connell sat down again. "You'll get the regular rate down at the plant, but you come here every Saturday

afternoon—Mundy will let you know when—and collect ten dollars extra. And we expect results.”

Amby nodded. Then he said: “How’s chances for an advance of ten bucks?”

“What is this, Tait—a hold-up?” Connell asked him harshly.

“The electricity’s been off a week,” Amby said. “The gas was turned off this mornin’.” His look rested for a moment on Connell’s face. “An’ for Thanksgivin’ dinner last week we hadda bowl of stew apiece.”

“You leveling with me?”

“It’s God’s honest truth,” Amby said.

“Okay,” Francis said. “We’ll call it a personal loan.” He took out his wallet, and gave Amby the money.

“Thanks. You’ll get it back soon,” Amby told him.

Connell held out his hand, and Amby, blinking, shook it. He said goodbye and went quickly out.

Francis pressed the button on his desk, and the girl came in. “Ask Mr. Mundy to step in here,” he said.

When Eddie sat down, Francis gave him the notes he had taken while he talked to Amby, and said: “There’s another one for you. He’s reporting for work in the morning.”

Eddie sat back and crossed his legs comfortably. “I don’t know if it’ll help to get any more of them,” he said. “From the reports I already got, it’s getting more serious every day. There’s more than a hundred that’ve already joined up in the union. We got rid of some of them, the ones we were sure of, but there are plenty to take their places. We—you’ll have to do something.”

Francis nodded. “I know,” he said. “And Cantrell is wild. It wouldn’t do any harm for him to listen to the men, find out what they want. But he’s standing up to his neck in principles. A shop-committee spoke to him yesterday, and when they finished, he called in the paymaster and gave the whole bunch their time right then and there. . . . I tried to tell him that all he was doing was making things worse. First thing he knows he’ll have a solid union, and the next thing, a strike.” He yawned wearily. “Excuse me,

Eddie. . . . This thing is riding me hard, and I'm tired. When you come right down to it, Cantrell's trouble with his help is no skin off my back. He's got his business, and I've got mine."

"Sure," Eddie said. "But his business happens right now to be our business, doesn't it?"

"Yes, I suppose so," Francis said. "We got a business order from him, and we got to deliver. It's not the first time. And personally, I'm glad to do it. I got no more use for the Reds in his shops than he has. But I've got to go carefully. . . . There's plenty of his misled hunkies who vote in my ward. I'd be all done politically if they thought I was double-crossing them. Not that I am, of course, but . . . well, it's a tough situation."

"Well, excuse me, Mr. Connell," Eddie said. "But I got an idea I've been turning over for quite a time now. Maybe I—"

"You have?" Francis said. "Well, let's have it, Eddie. If it's good, it's got to be simple and quick."

"I don't know," Eddie said cautiously. "What I was thinking of though, was a sort of Vigilante Committee. You know, like they had in the old days. . . . We could call it the Good Citizens' League, or something like that."

Francis frowned. "I don't get it, Eddie."

"Well, it would really be a strong-arm squad, that's what," Eddie said. "A bunch of men who'd go around to the organizers and leaders, and—well, put a little pressure on them."

"Pressure? You mean, beat them up?"

"Yes, if it was necessary to stop them," Eddie said firmly. "Of course, they could be warned first. But if they wouldn't listen—"

Francis stared at him. "You're a tough one, Eddie," he said.

"You said it's a tough situation, Mr. Connell."

Francis nodded. "Just the same, I wouldn't want anybody to get hurt." He thought of Josie.

"If they're the wreckers you believe they are, then force is the only thing they'll understand," Eddie said quickly. "That's how I came to think—"

"All right," Francis said. "It's as good as anything else, I guess.

You go to work on it, Eddie, but let me know before you start anything."

"Me?" Eddie said. "I thought—"

"Who else? It's your idea, isn't it?" Francis said sharply. "You know my hand can't show in it. What's the matter? You afraid of your own ideas?"

Eddie said tightly: "I'm not afraid of it." He paused. "Maybe all I'm afraid about is that there won't be enough in it for me."

Francis laughed suddenly. "You're a tough boy, all right, Eddie . . . never guess it to look at you. Go ahead with it then. . . . If you can do the job as it should be done, there'll be enough money to make your head swim with the shine of it. How's that?"

"That's all right," Eddie said.

"But mind you, my hand's not to show in it, Eddie!" Francis said, and thought: If Josie could hear us now. . . . He shivered with weariness.

Eddie stood up.

"Just a minute, Eddie," Francis said. He looked up at the other. "We may not have to use your little scheme." He hesitated. "There may be nothing in it, but I've been tipped off to something—you're not to breathe a word of this, understand?"

Eddie shook his head, and looked wonderingly at Francis.

"My information," Francis went on slowly, "is that maybe the government, the Federal government is going to turn loose on the Reds all over the country . . . round them up and deport them. It's supposed to be a tip straight from Washington, and if it's true. . . . Well, our information'll go to the right place, and our problem'll be off our hands. Settled. See what I mean?"

"I see," Eddie said.

"But you go ahead with your scheme just the same. I mean the preparation of it, though I tell you frankly, Eddie, I hope we won't have to use it."

"That's all right with me," Eddie said in a flat voice.

"Good," Francis said. He got up and went to one of the cabinets

against the wall. From a drawer he took a bottle and a couple of glasses. "Have some poison, Eddie. . . . It's the real thing. The kid that sells it runs it in up the river."

"This is the real thing, all right," Eddie said after his first cautious sip. "Who gets it for you?"

"Here, I got his card right here," Francis told him. "It's a young Dago. Just give him a call any time, and tell him Frank gave you his name."

He took the card from his wallet, and Eddie, pretending interest and excitement, copied the name off hastily: "Joseph Cascione—Household Supplies—16 Crowne Street—Unity 2245." "'Household Supplies,' that's a hot one," he said.

"Well," Francis said, lifting his glass, "bottoms up. . . . Here's to crime."

"To crime," Eddie echoed him.

LOUIE DAVIS was hurrying out of the Works a few minutes after five when he ran into Joe Cascione. "Hi, Joe," he said, and started to hurry past because he had been invited for the first time to supper with Irene and her folks at the Curtis's house, and he didn't want to be late.

But Joe took him by the arm and said: "Listen, Louie, I been tryin' to get a hold of you the last couple of days." He offered Louie his cigarettes, but Louie shook his head.

"Listen, Joe, I got a date with my girl. I can't stop now," he said.

"Don't worry, she'll wait," Joe said. "I got a proposition for you. It'll just take a coupla minutes." He drew Louie back against the fence. "Boy, it's cold, huh?"

"Ah, c'mon, Joe, what's it all about?" Louie said. "No kidding, Irene's waiting for me."

"Irene, hey? The same one all these years?" Joe said. "You're a freak, kid. You was goin' with her in grammar school."

Louie said impatiently: "Listen, will you . . . ?"

"Hold your horses, Louie. I'll give you the dope. Right

now. . . . It's important, see? I ain't here just to chew the rag with you."

Louie waited.

Joe touched him lightly and asked: "How much you making there in the office? Eighteen? Twenty bucks?"

Louie was silent, and Joe laughed. "That's right, be proud and don't tell me. Keep your lousy little secret. I know you're lucky to be gettin' twenty from Cantrell even if your old man does have an in. But what the hell, that's what I want to see you about."

"What's my money got to do with you?" Louie said. "If you want to borrow—"

"Nah," Joe said, "who needs your cheap dough? . . . Listen, Louie, I wanna put you wise to the real dough. I want you to come in with me."

"Come in? I don't know what you're talking about, Joe."

"You mean nobody tipped you off?" Joe said. "Jes's, I thought the whole town knew it. Well, Louie my boy, I'm bootleggin', see? And I'm goin' good—not a lousy couple of sawbucks a week like you, but thirty and forty bucks a week easy. And that's only the beginnin'."

"No kiddin'?" Louie stared at him. "You're a bootlegger?"

"Yeh," Joe said, "I'm the bogey-man your old lady used to tell you stories about when you couldn't unbutton your own drawers. . . . Sure, I'm a bootlegger. How the hell d'you think I pay for my car, for my clothes? Out of the sixteen bucks a week I get in the shippin' room? Could you do it my way on twenty bucks a week?"

"Okay, then," Louie said abruptly. "You're a bootlegger. Congratulations. But I have to go. . . . I told you I got a date."

"Look at him," Joe jerked out, "a smart guy that works in the office. He thinks I been waitin' to tell him the great news that I'm a bootlegger. Snap out of it, Louie. I told you I got a proposition." He jerked at the sharp lapels of his coat. "Listen, Louie, I want you to come in with me. . . . Whaddya say?"

Louie breathed out suddenly, and his breath made a white

shadow on the chill December dusk. "You mean you want me to be partners with you?" he exclaimed, suddenly envisioning the face of Fred Curtis if Louis Davis, his future son-in-law, were a bootlegger.

"Sure, that's just what I mean," Joe said. He lowered his voice. "Listen, Louie, I need somebody I c'n trust. Somebody that'll level with me. There's plenty of wise guys around town that'd be glad to throw in with me and then cut my throat if they had a chance. So I don't want no bums. I'm gonna run a legitimate business and I want a quiet respectable guy like you. Somebody I know. Somebody I c'n trust." He tapped Louie's chest with his forefinger. "An' listen, Louie, you put in with me, and you're on Easy Street. In a couple of years you'll be free and independent. You'll be your own boss, you'll own your own house, you won't be takin' abuse from some cheap office manager. You'll be in the money, maybe big money. . . ."

"But the cops?" Louie said. "Aren't you afraid?"

"Afraid?" Joe shrugged. "Sure I'm afraid, but listen, Louie, I got protection. I'm paying off plenty for it, but I got it. I told you I was in a legitimate way. I'm not doin' any sneakin' up back alleys. Some of the best people in town are my customers. Yeh, you'd be surprised at some of the big muck-a-mucks in this town that can't get along without their suck at the ol' bottle. Me, I'm fixin' 'em up. Didn't you ever hear of the law of supply and demand? Well, they're the demand, and I'm the supply," he said exultantly. He tapped Louie's chest again. "So whaddya say?"

Louie shook his head. "No," he said. "I can't, Joe. It sounds good, but it's not my way."

"Yeh," Joe said, after a moment. "I know. You're a good boy. You wouldn't do nothin' wrong. You wouldn't break the law." His lips drew back a little from his teeth. "Cut out the crap with me, Louie. I'm wise, see? You're not good, you're just scared. I could see your eyes poppin' out of your head when I was tellin' you about the dough. But you're scared. You'll always be scared. You'll always be suckin' up to some cheap boss, scared to ask for a

two-buck raise, scared to join the union they're tryin' to make in there because you might get fired, scared to breathe when the big boss walks through and looks around at you and the rest of the good boys as if you was the scum that comes up off the bottom of the vat. I know your kind. . . . But it's my kind that wins out in this country, Louie, ol' kid. The tough ones, the ones that fight, the ones that grab—they're the ones that the suckers like you are workin' for."

Louie mumbled something, and Joe said: "You want to get married to that broad, don't you? But you can't. Why not? You ain't got the dough, that's why. You'll get married in three, four years when you've scratched together a little to pay the first installments on the furniture, and you'll be payin' installments the rest of your life. It'll be the way it was in my family—in yours too, I bet. You'll be owin' doctor's bills, your wife'll break her back over a washin' tub, but what the hell!—you'll be good, you wouldn't break the law. Oh, no—not you. Breakin' the law, that's for the big shots, the bosses,—they're the only ones c'n break the laws. Christ, how the hell d'you think they got their money 'n' their independence? By bein' good? Crap! By bein' tough."

"Joe, I might do it if it wasn't for Irene," Louie mumbled. "She'd never consent to it."

"Yeh, I know," Joe said. "She's got the same ideas you got. But someday, jus' for the hell of it, when she's layin' in bed sick, and the house is in a dirty mess and the kids are hollerin' for their supper—someday you ask her. And ask her how her old man made his dough. Ask her tonight. Or ask him. . . ." He straightened and settled his coat snugly on his shoulders. "So long, good boy," he said. "So long, sucker."

"So long, Joe," Louie said, and watched Joe's slim back going off in the dusk. Then he pulled out his watch. He'd have to break his neck hurrying home to change his clothes and get washed up.

At home, while he was shaving he thought how funny Irene would think it was when he told her about Joe's proposition, but after a time it did not seem funny to him, and he made up his mind

not to tell her. He remembered what Joe had said about his getting married, and his mind turned away from the spectacle of Irene over the washtub, Irene sick in bed, himself hopeless and helpless, bound to life only by the narrow link of the bills in his pay envelope, bound as his father was. I'll get to be like him, he thought, squeezing every cent, scared to death of losing my job, beating my kids to prove I'm free and independent. He closed his eyes tightly together and stayed so for a moment, not looking at his melancholy face in the flawed mirror of the washstand.

When he came downstairs, his mother said: "You look fine, Louie."

"Did you put out the light in the bathroom?" his father asked. "You forgot again night before last."

"Sure, I put it out," Louie said.

His father looked up from the *Chronicle*. "While you're still living in this house, young man, I expect respect from you."

Louie exclaimed: "What now . . . !" but caught his mother's pleading look and said: "Yes, Father."

When he was going out, his mother caught up with him in the hall. "Louie, make allowances for your father, he's so nervous these days," she said.

"What's biting him now?" Louie muttered. "You'd think I was still twelve years old, the way he talks to me."

"I know, I know," his mother murmured. "But he's upset. He's been hoping for months to get old Mr. Lovett's job—you know, the head bookkeeper—but nothing's been said yet, and he gets so easily upset. Just before you got home he had poor Margaret in tears over nothing at all. I—"

"Still taking it out on his kids, is he?" Louie said.

"Please, Louie—" she stopped suddenly and looked around, her eyelids blinking.

It's his money-craziness has done this to her, Louie thought. God, if I ever treat Irene. . . . "Okay, Ma," he said with pitying love, "I guess I can stand it a while longer. When I'm married—"

"Oh," she said, "when you're married . . ." and then as if she

had guessed his thought: "Be gentle, Louie. Be gentle." She kissed him, and he hurried out.

At the Curtis's just before they sat down to eat, Irene murmured to him quickly: "Don't get into any arguments, Louie," and he nodded in surprise. Towards the end of dinner, though, he understood her warning.

"Irene tells me you were in France," Mrs. Curtis said. Her eyes moved aggressively upon him, and he was uneasy under her direct stare.

"Yes. About three months in the trenches," he told her.

"And Paris?" Mr. Curtis asked. He dipped his spoon into the Bavarian cream and waited, but Louie looked blank and he went on: "They tell me that the actions of some of our troops in Paris were disgraceful."

"I wouldn't exactly say that, Mr. Curtis," Louie said. "Of course, there were some. . . ."

As if he had not spoken, Mrs. Curtis said: "Disgraceful, the way they acted. Their drinking, the way they carried on with those women. . . . Oh, no," she said quickly as Louie opened his mouth, "don't try to defend them, Mr. Davis. I know. Too many soldiers forgot that they were the representatives of America in Europe and allowed themselves to indulge every European vice."

Mr. Curtis cleared his throat noisily, and Irene said: "But, Mother, that's not so. It's as Louie says—maybe there were some. . . ."

"Sometimes I think our going into the war did more harm than good," Mr. Curtis said. "Of course," he added hastily, "of course, we—uh—made the world safe for democracy, but Mrs. Curtis is right. The soldiers came back—uh—contaminated by foreign ways and foreign ideas. If we had not entered the war, certainly a good deal of the radical agitation in this country would not have started. The soldiers brought back with them a good deal of vicious propaganda as well as vicious habits."

"I don't know about that," Louie said. "As a matter of fact, we came back better Americans than when we went." He caught

Irene's eye, and she shook her head at him, but the slow irritation that Joe Cascione had rubbed up in him mastered him, and he said: "A good many of the soldiers went through hell in those trenches. They got a right to expect some return from the country. Jobs, at least. If they're dissatisfied as you say, they got a right to be. But you can't call them radicals after what they went through there."

"Do I understand," Mrs. Curtis said icily, "that you condone the actions of the Reds in this country?"

To himself he thought: Go to hell, you old battle-axe! and replied: "No, I don't, but it seems kind of funny to be talking about the soldiers as if they all came back Reds, with 'vicious habits.' " He had realized by now that they were trying to show Irene what an unwise choice she had made. For God's sake! he thought: contamination, vicious habits, Reds—they're certainly laying it on me.

"And I suppose," said Mrs. Curtis, "you believe that a man should still drink liquor even when our Constitution forbids it!"

He stared at her in surprise at this new attack. "I didn't say that. Just the same," he continued recklessly, "Prohibition would never've been passed if the soldiers had been home. They didn't even have a chance to vote on it."

Mr. Curtis pursed his lips. "It seems to me, Mr. Davis," he said rising, "that you have some strange un-American ideas."

Irene was frowning at Louie, and seeing the worried look on her face, he realized that he had to placate these strangers who were her parents. As they rose from the table, he said: "I'd like to speak to you, Mr. Curtis, alone for a few minutes."

Irene said hastily: "I'll help Nora with the dishes, Mother."

"If you don't mind, I should also like to hear what you have to say, Mr. Davis," Mrs. Curtis said. "After all, I am Irene's mother. . . ." She swept from the room ahead of the two men.

In the living-room, seated on a fat blue mohair armchair, Louie said with a timid smile at them: "Uh—of course, you know what I want to ask you about. . . . It's about Irene and me. Uh—I'd like to ask you—I'd like to marry her if it's all right with you."

They were silent, and he hurried on, feeling the sweat start under his collar. "Not right away, of course—I'll have to save a little more than I got right now, but—"

"How much have you got?" Mr. Curtis said. He had lighted a cigar, and with his head tipped back was watching the smoke curl up.

"Yes," his wife said, "exactly how much, Mr. Davis."

He hated them. "About a hundred and fifty dollars. I've been saving steady ever since I got back from France and went to work again."

Mr. Curtis lowered his head and looked at him. "A hundred and fifty? That's very little to get married on."

"I should say it is," Mrs. Curtis said. "Why, how could you hope to furnish a flat?"

"I thought—" Louie stammered, "we weren't going to get married right away. I'm going to save up a little more."

Fred Curtis looked at the thin worried face beyond the haze of his cigar smoke. Nothing solid there, he told himself, and caught his wife's eye. Irene could do better any day in the week. "Then aren't you rushing things a little?" he asked. "I mean—when d'you think you'll have enough?"

"Yes, when?" his wife said.

"Well," Louie said, his voice cracking, "I thought maybe another hundred—we could get married in a year or so. . . ." He cleared his dry throat, and suddenly frightened, suddenly sensing the sharp edge of their hostility and their reluctance to surrender Irene not to marriage, but to him—impossible that Irene should ever lie in someone else's arms in a fully furnished, double-size flat, with a thick bankbook lying under the linens in the bureau drawers—blurted at them: "We're in love with each other. We're young, we could make out all right."

Mrs. Curtis said proudly: "Mr. Curtis and I waited ten years before we were married. I can assure you that he had a good deal more than you have when we were married."

How long have I waited? Louie thought. Since I was twelve

I've loved her, since the time she first kissed me—so long ago—in the park the day my father strapped me till I fainted. Did these two get married with the bankbook in their hands? Did they go to bed with a bank voucher under the pillows? Smiling weakly, placatingly, he said: "Nowadays young people take more chances maybe." He had not said the right thing, he knew right away.

"Yes, and that's the trouble with them," Mrs. Curtis said, pushing her large-bosomed body belligerently towards him.

"I see no reason," her husband said, "that you should expect Irene who has been raised in security to take chances. Marriage is far too important a matter. And the things that matter are not got by taking chances."

They want me to give her up, Louie thought. They want to get rid of me, and his heart twisted in terror that she should be lost to him. Even when he was in the trenches, he had never had any doubt that he would return to Irene and that she would be his wife. But now! Thickly he said: "At least, until I get some more money, you'll let us be engaged?"

Fred Curtis pursed his wide mouth. Without looking at his wife—they've settled it all between them, Louie realized, settled it already—he said: "No, I'm afraid that would be unjust to everyone. We, I do not think it right that Irene should commit herself since your future together is by no means certain."

"You mean that you—that you want other men to call on her?" Louie asked. "Is that what you mean?"

"That lies with Irene, of course," Mrs. Curtis said, "but after all, if, as you say, you love each other—though under what circumstances you made this discovery I have never heard—you will not stand in the way of the minor pleasure of meeting other people."

Bitch! Louie thought. You don't know what love is—sure, you could wait ten years. Cold-blooded bitch, you could have waited twenty. He looked at them despairingly. "Well, all right," he said, "I suppose I must wait."

"There, my boy, that's the proper attitude," Mr. Curtis said. He lowered his cigar as if pulling down the standard of battle.

"I'm glad to find you so sensible after all," Mrs. Curtis told him, preening herself and glancing with quick satisfaction at her husband. She got up quickly.

"Uh—Irene and I thought of taking in a movie," Louie said. "I hope. . . ."

They could afford to be generous. "Why, certainly," Mrs. Curtis said. "After all, we want you to feel that we are friendly. We know that Irene would not go out with someone . . . I mean in such matters we trust her judgment."

"It's all right, my boy," Mr. Curtis said heartily.

Irene had her coat and hat on when they came out into the hall. "What . . . did you—" She looked from Louie to her parents.

"We've had a very satisfactory little talk," her mother said, smiling. "Indeed, yes."

Irene brightened, but Louie caught her eye, and she said: "Well, Louie can tell me everything you've said on our way downtown."

"Sure," Louie said.

Walking towards the car-stop, he told her what they had said to him. "What can we do, Irene?" he ended. "Gee, I feel so low. . . . It'll take me years to get enough—"

She pressed on his arm so that he swung towards her. "Oh, Louie," she said, "it's what I was sure they'd say, but what of it? Where's your brains? After all, we're free, white, and twenty-one."

His walk slowed, and he looked at her in bewilderment. "Gee, Irene, I don't get it."

"Stupid!" she said. "How did I ever come to fall in love with such a big fool? So helpless!" She smiled, and he grinned back at her uncertainly. "Don't you see," she went on, "that when we're ready we can get married? Any time!"

"Married? You mean even if they say no?"

"If that's how it has to be—yes," she said, "of course. Trouble with you, Louie, is that you're too good. You wouldn't think—"

"Irene, you're wonderful," he said humbly.

"Big baby," she murmured. Her eyes shone upon him.

"I'll save," he said. "You'll see. Every penny, every nickel. . . ." He put his arms around her, and kissed her cool fresh mouth.

But a couple of mornings later when he got down to work, he saw a crowd buzzing around the bulletin board, and when he asked someone on the edge of the crowd: "What's up?" the other answered: "Nothin'! Nothin' at all! The sonsabitches just cut us ten percent, that's all."

"No kidding!" Louie said, and the man snarled: "You c'n read, can'tcha?"

Louie felt sick. How'm I going to do it? he thought. Jesus, I have to save, but how can I? It was two-twenty a week less, more than a hundred a year less. He turned away from the muttering crowd and bumped into Amby Tait and Joe Cascione standing just behind him.

Joe grinned at him. "Now, you'll have to give up cigarettes or somethin', hey, Louie?"

"Yeh," Louie mumbled, "great joke, huh?"

Joe drew him and Amby a little away from the crowd into the dirty trampled slush of the yard. "It's nothin' to me," he said, "I'm quittin' soon anyway for my own business, but if I wasn't, believe me I know what I'd do."

"Sure," Amby said, "a helluva lot you'd do." He looked quickly from one to the other.

"You guys don't know what's goin' on underneath here among the guys," Joe told them. "But I'm on the inside. I know, see?"

"What do you mean, Joe?" Louie asked him.

Joe said swiftly: "They're gonna try to break this open shop, that's what. They're gonna organize. They'll strike. There'll be plenty of heads split open."

Amby laughed. "Say, I ain't got no hair left. I don't want my head split open into the bargain."

Louie plucked at Joe's arm. "Who?" he asked insistently. "Tell me, Joe, I want to know. Who's doing the organizing?"

Joe turned and gave him a long direct look, running his eyes slowly over Louie's face as if looking for some strength not yet

revealed in the smooth unlined skin, the light candid eyes. "It's not for you, Louie," he said abruptly. "These guys are tough, you can't travel with them unless you wanna take chances. An' you don't wanna take chances. I know you don't."

Amby broke in: "How about me, Joe? Huh? How about me?" His eyes darted about and returned. "Tip me off, willya? . . . Jes's, why all the secrets?"

"They ain't ready yet, that's why," Joe said. "There's too many stool pigeons in the place already. Plenty of good guys lost their jobs already because they talked outa turn."

"But, Joe, we're right guys, ain't we? Me and Louie? Since we was kids," Amby said. He jerked his head nervously and hurried on: "C'mon, Joe, kick in—I heard plenty, but who're the big guys? Who's behind it?"

Joe said abruptly: "You wanna know? I'll tell you." They had paused not far from the door with its weathered sign "Employees," opening and closing quickly before them as the men came up, passed them, and went through. "It's Cantrell, that's who. He's makin' all this—he's forcin' it. Don't you know, you saps, that you can push a sucker just so far? And when he gets to realize he's a sucker, he gets sore. Sure. So these guys are sore, see? Whatever they do, they're pushed into it." He poked a finger at Louie. "Look at Louie, here. He was always a good boy, know what I mean? Always nice to his folks, never gave his teachers any bother, never got bawled out in the army by some college-boy second looey, never hung around poolrooms or chased whores, just wants to settle down and be a good little American—hey Louie? So what? So Cantrell cuts his pay, and Louie can't get married. So Louie gets sore. He's a good American, but just so far, see what I mean? Now he's not free. Even though he was good, he's got nothing to show for it. So he wants to fight. . . . And so would you, Amby, if the war didn't give you a goin' over and make you kind of bats."

"Who, me?" Amby said. He grinned.

"Sure, you," Joe said. He turned to Louie. "You don't like

what I said, huh? But it's true, ain't it?"

"Ah, you're just sore because I won't go in with you on that—you know—proposition," Louie said shakily.

Joe spat into the snow. "Sure, believe that, if you wanna. But I cut you deep just the same. You're beggin' to know who's doin' the organizin', huh?"

"Well, spill it then," Amby said.

"I can't," Joe told him. "They'd cut my heart out. . . . But they won't take you anyways, Louie. You know why? Your old man. They'd be afraid you'd squeal to him."

"Why, I'd drop dead first!"

"But he got you your job here, didn't he?"

"What's that got to do with it?" Louie said.

"It's nothin' to me, but the fellers don't like it, that's all," Joe said. He walked away, his dark full-cheeked face gleaming maliciously at them.

Amby said: "Listen, Louie, stay away from him. He's a tough guy, he'll get you in wrong."

"Don't worry about me," Louie said. "I can take care of myself. From now on. . . ." He went quickly into the open doorway, where the power belts were just lifting their screaming whine on the drives.

AL SCHAEFFER was leaning against the door watching his mother while she tidied up the kitchen. As she put dishes away, she said over her shoulder to him: "What're you hanging around for? I thought you were going out tonight."

"Date's off," he said. "Hilda's got the flu."

"It's this nasty weather," she said. She came back from the china closet. "You going to marry the girl?"

"Don't know," he told her, "she hasn't asked me yet."

"You're a smart one, you are. . . . What're you going to do, hang around me all evening?"

"Maybe."

"Whyn't you go out and see some of the boys instead of hang-

ing onto my apron strings, you sissy?"

"Quit nagging me," he said. "Can't I spend a quiet evening at home if I want to?"

She persisted. "How about Dave Bandler? You haven't seen him in a long time."

"What's up?" he said, already suspecting. "You seem awful anxious to get me out of the house."

"He's a good friend of yours, and you ought to keep in touch with him." She sat down by the kitchen table, and he sat down opposite her.

"It's kind of hard," he told her soberly. "You go with a guy for years, then he gets married—and that's an end of it."

"Oh, no," she said quickly, "it shouldn't be that way. . . . Go out and see them. It's a shame if you let a good friend like Dave go."

He leaned across the table then, and said: "Listen, Ma, I'm no dope. I can see you want me out of the house. What's up? Is Pa . . . is he having another of those meetings?"

"Yes," she said, not looking at him.

"Well, I don't like it," he said bluntly. "And I'm going to tell him so mighty soon."

"It's none of your business." She came as close to pleading with him as was possible with her. "Please, Albert, let him go his own way."

He pushed the chair back abruptly and got up, his face flushed. He's more like his father than he thinks, she thought.

"It is my business," he said. "It's all our business. . . . Can't he see the chance he's taking? We got a nice little business, we're doing well. That Mrs. Mundy is a wonder. Between us we could make the store hum. But there's a lot of people don't come in because they don't like Pa."

"Everyone likes him," she said sharply.

"In business, it's different," he said. "You get fifty, a hundred people not coming in, not because they know anything definite to dislike Pa for—but, oh well, maybe they heard a kind of whisper

about him. Maybe someone said he's got crazy ideas, then the next one says he's crazy, and the first thing you know there's that many people not coming in."

"Who says he's crazy?" she asked him. "Who says that?"

"Oh, how should I know?" he replied. "But that's how things go. Amby Tait, for example."

"Oh, him!" she said in derision, "he's cracked anyway. . . . I've seen him myself, mumbling on the street as he walked along. See what the war did to him. The war your father was against."

"Yuh," he said, "you're talking like Pa now. The war had to be, someone had to go, it's tough on those like Amby. How could Pa or anyone else stop it?"

Between Al and his father, since Al had got back from France, there was a kind of polite truce. Often he had wondered while he was reading his mother's letters at camp and later while he was in France, if his father would even let him into the house when he came back from the war. But when he did get home, nothing happened. His father had shaken hands with him and said: "I'm glad to see you again, Albert," and Al had mumbled something in reply, shocked by the loose jowls on the face he had remembered as firm and ruddy, and troubled by the feel of the narrow bones in his father's thin hand.

But they had not remade the quiet friendship of the days before he enlisted. They spoke politely to each other, skirting away from the things they might argue about, casual with each other at home, businesslike at the store. His father trusted him, though, and had let Al do some of the buying, particularly in the children's line Al was trying to build up. With Mrs. Mundy alert and interested, they had made a good go of it. But it could be better, much better, he thought rapidly.

"He ought to be satisfied to mind his own business," he said to his mother, "and not go preaching his pretty theories to people. Some day he's going to make trouble for us all," he concluded moodily.

"Nonsense!" she said. "It's a free country, a man can say what he likes, what he believes."

"He's got to think of others too," Al said. "He's got to think of you and your comfort and security."

"Albert, you make me tired!" she replied. "You think I'm going to go bawling to him, and ask him to swallow his life for mine? . . . You leave him be. Just go your own way, and let him go his. I get tired of standing between you and him, waiting for an explosion, trying to keep you apart. That's what tires me, if you want to know. . . ." She stood up and faced him. "What's more, it's time you minded your own business. If you don't like what he says, what he does, get started on your own. Get married, get your own business. You young snips, you're great hands at telling someone else how to behave while you sit on your fat behinds and don't know yourself how to behave. Maybe if you try hard, young Albert, you might get to be the man your father is."

"Don't get mad, Ma," he said. "I didn't mean—"

She went on strongly, loosening her thick gray hair with the vigorous toss of her head. "You think because you were in France and fought, you know something. Well, you don't. Your father's fought all his life. You went to fight because you thought it was the right thing to do. Well, your father's doing the same thing, and has been doing it longer than you. You let him alone, the way I have. I don't agree with him any more than you do, but that's neither here nor there. You think I'm going to trade on his devotion to me to make him stop?"

"I want to argue it out with him," he said.

"You better leave well enough alone, Albert!"

"Oh, don't get excited," he said. "I'm kind of sick of this make-believe politeness between us."

"You don't know what you want," she said.

"I want to be safe," he said.

"Now look, Albert," she said anxiously, "do what I said. Mind your own business; go out and call on Dave Bandler."

He shook his head. "I'm staying for Pa's meeting," he said stubbornly.

"You haven't been asked."

"It's my house, too, isn't it?"

"No," she said, "it's his. . . . Please, Albert."

"If I live in it, it's mine, too," he said.

They heard the front doorbell ring, and then Marius's voice, hearty and encouraging.

"Here come his hunkies," Al said.

His mother came close to him. "Albert, don't you dare make any trouble!"

He smiled down at her. "Listen, Ma, don't get excited. I promise I won't make trouble. Whatd' you think?—that I'm going to bang my own father on the head? I'm going to listen, that's all. Maybe he can get me around to his way of thinking, after all. And maybe. . . ."

"Maybe what?" she asked.

"And maybe I'll be able to pull him around to my way. Our way."

Suddenly she smiled. "I've tried to do it all my life and couldn't, but you will. Is that the idea?"

"Sure."

"But promise me. . . ."

"Yes, yes, will you quit worrying?"

"No, I won't. I've worried about him all my life."

"How about me?" he asked.

"I don't have to," she said curtly. "You're a fat slob, you'll never run into trouble."

He stared at her, and the front doorbell rang again. The voices mingled together in the hall, and Al went out.

He stood back in the hallway and watched his father greeting the men as they came in, saying their names over carefully as they mumbled them to him while they awkwardly took off their dark overcoats. They're like bears, Al thought, looking at their thick hulking shoulders, their slow heavy movements. He wondered what his father would say or do if he walked in on the meeting. Maybe, he thought, I ought to ask him if I can come. Or maybe just walk

in and sit down before he gets started. About twenty men had come already, he guessed.

His father came out of the living-room and saw Al leaning against the newel post. "If more come, you'll let them in, Albert?" he asked. "I want to get started here."

Al nodded. He opened his mouth to ask if he might come in, but his father closed the door before Al could speak. He felt a quick spasm of anger and then of disgust. "It's nothing to me," he mumbled, and went to the closet under the stairs to get his hat and coat. He would go up to see Dave Bandler. He put his coat on, and headed for the door. But as he got to it the bell rang, and when he opened it, he saw Amby Tait and Louie Davis standing on the step. He was pleased. "Hey!" he said. He pulled off his coat while he spoke. "C'mon in, I haven't seen you guys for months. Where the hell you been keeping yourselves?"

They greeted him, but made no move to take off their coats.

"C'mon," he said, "get your stuff off and we'll go up to my room and chew the rag. . . . What're you waiting for?"

Then it dawned on him even before Louie said: "Uh—they sent us here to see your father, Al."

"Yeah," Amby said, "they told us to come." His quick sliding look went around the hallway.

Al made himself laugh. He felt embarrassed, as if Louie and Amby had surprised him at something not quite decent. Then his anger mounted again, and he said sharply: "Okay." He jerked his hand at the closed door. "In there." He took their coats and hats, hearing meantime his father's voice murmuring from behind the door. Then saying again: "In here," he opened the door for them, and went through behind them, keeping his head lowered and sitting down finally with the other two in the crowded room, sniffing the close air and remembering it like the smell of barracks.

Marius had stopped talking when they came in, and Al lifted his head to look at him, half expecting his father's head to jerk him to the door.

But his father's face was calm, he held Al's eye only for a second, and then began to talk again. "So don't think that I'm trying to teach you something un-American. I'm not. I want this country to be great. But first I want it to be good. I do not think it can be great without first being good. Some people in this city think I want to go out with bombs and blow it up. But that is wrong. If I want to blow up anything, it is the evil in this city that keeps its people from being good and great, evil like dirty politics when men sell their power with the people for money, evil like the use of the people's monies for private gain, evil like the bleeding and the breaking of the people's bodies to make a few rich men richer, evil like poverty and sickness."

His face began to glow, his words began to tumble out, and Al thought: He'd do better if he didn't let himself get excited. His attention wandered. For one thing he had heard it all before, heard it since he was old enough to understand the spoken word, heard it over the dinner table while his mother urged his father not to let his food get cold, heard it in the talk of his father and grandfather up in grandpa's room, heard it in the warm dusk of a summer evening while they sat on the front porch, heard it day and night, year in and year out. And it's funny, he reflected, I never put much stock in it. I always kind of pitied him, a little ashamed, too, for pitying him, because a father is someone you don't pity—especially when you're a kid. Maybe if I hadn't heard it so often, maybe if it came to me fresh, I would take it in, I would believe it.

He looked at the faces around him. They looked tired. Their expression was one of quiet weariness mingled with a kind of regret as if they wished they had stayed at home and gone to bed instead of coming out into the icy night to listen to a speech from a stranger in a strange house where they felt uneasy and purposeless. He's wasting himself on them, Al thought, he's wasting his strength. If he could only convince me now, or Louie, or Amby, it would mean something. But these—they're hardly human, seems to me. And he looked at the faces again, getting no clear picture of any one of them, but seeing them like great lumps of a broken mass

scattered along the wall, getting a confused impression of blank eyes and dark skin and rank hair growing up out of the dark lumps of their bodies. "As if they were rocks out on a desert somewhere," he said to himself, "or as if they were sunk, settling deeper and deeper into the mud of the riverbed while the river flowed over them drowning them deeper and deeper."

And looking at his father, he felt a mingling of admiration for his struggle to make these lumps believe what they themselves deep in their own minds and experience, deep in their own hearts knew was not true; admiration and pity that he should be wasting his time and strength; pity and impatience that he would not devote himself entirely to making the most of what he already had made by following not his way, but, unknowingly, the country's way.

He listened to his father again, and Marius was saying: ". . . not to believe that you can hoist yourselves up by your own bootstraps. It is not true. Some did, yes, when the country was wide open and the men were few and there were thousands of miles of land and billions of acres of trees, of wheat, of meat, of iron. In those days a man could not believe that such vastness could ever close in on him. No, he thought he could never use it up.

"So he spent its richness with a free hand. He ate up its millions of buffalo, its billions of wild pigeons, almost in one gulp; he skinned its animals with one stroke of his knife, he cleared its forests with almost one sweep of his axe, he clutched its riches out of the ground, and still it seemed inexhaustible.

"Then one day there was not quite so much somehow. It was not quite so easy to get what a man needed to live on. He looked at the great empty place in the sky where the pigeons used to be like clouds in front of the sun, he looked at the empty prairies that the buffalo had drummed with their million feet, he looked at the shallow empty holes in the ground, and while he was looking and wondering and getting ready to cry, suddenly he looked around him—and he saw that he was chained to a machine by day, and living in a dirty box at night.

"That's all. The way you are living now. And after a while it did not seem strange to him. There were millions more like him—like the millions of pigeons in the sky, like the millions of buffalo on the prairie, like the millions of beavers on the creeks. He did not know that now it was he who was being swept out of the sky, shot down to the ground, drowned in the creeks and the rivers. No, no! Bleeding to death, he did not know it. He does not know it now. But I tell you so now. And now you know it."

He paused and looked at them expectantly, but they did not move, they did not jump to their feet, they sat and looked dully at him, and Al thought: Poor Pa. They know what he's saying, but they know it isn't true. And he looked at Amby Tait who sat with a little knowing smile on his face, and said to himself: "He knows it isn't true." Then he looked at Louie Davis, and Louie was sitting there with his brows creased vertically, straining to take in every word and looking every once in a while at the lumps as if he could not understand where he was or what he was doing there. Poor sucker, Al thought, a lot of good it'll do you to listen to this stuff. Get out and fight for yourself. . . . This talk'll never get you anywhere.

It was as if Louie had heard him. First he put his hand up—as if he was still in school, Al said to himself—and then when Marius looked at him, he got slowly to his feet, holding on to the back of the chair in front of him. He said slowly: "Excuse me, Mr. Schaeffer. I just wanted to ask you . . . I mean, things are not going so good for some of us."

All of the heads had turned slowly towards him, and their eyes watched him without curiosity, but with a kind of relief as if now that one of them was talking, they were coming closer to what they sought.

"I mean," Louie said, "what can we do?" He sat down.

"Yes, yes," Al said to himself, "answer that one, Pa." The disgust and anger he had felt out in the hall still ran like a hidden current under his thought. He looked at his father's untroubled face, and thought: Go on—answer that one.

"Ah! a good question, Mister," his father said, "I will try to answer it for you."

One of the lumps was suddenly struggling to its feet. "Last week," it said, "last week. . . ." It paused and looked frightened, and the others looked frightened with it. "Last week. . . ."

For God's sake, spit it out, Al thought. This is a Goddamn farce.

The lump blurted: "Last week dey cut us ten pertsent." It sat down abruptly.

Give them a speech about that, Pa. Explain that. Go on, tell them what's what now.

"My dear people. . . ." Marius said. He dropped his hands to his side and made a little motion as of putting the statement away until he was ready for it. Then he said: "I cannot get your money back for you. You must not think that I can give you a scheme that you can use on your bosses to get your money back. Why should I pretend to you? But"—he paused—"but I will answer this young man's question. . . ." He nodded at Louie, who lowered his head. "He wants to know what you can do. There are two things you must do. First, you must remember that you are all in the same boat. I mean, you must all feel this together: that you are all workingmen and that you will always be workingmen. You must give up thinking that soon you will be able to pull ahead of the others, that you will leave them behind and get to be your own boss. When you feel this, you are killing yourselves; you are pulling apart instead of together." He held up his hand, loose-fingered, and then tightened it into a fist. "Second, you must band together tightly. You must understand that together you can do much that you cannot do alone. When you are joined together, you must put your own men into the city offices—you must elect your own men for mayor, for councilman, for commissioner. Because it is only by holding the offices of political power, that you can control your lives. Then, when you have your own people, yourselves, in office, then you can get what you need, then you can get what you want to be content and happy." He stopped and looked at them. "Do you understand me?"

Al leaped to his feet, his disgust breaking out in his swift speech. "What are you saying?" he jerked out. "Why are you discouraging these people, telling them they'll be workmen all their lives? It's not true, they don't have to be. . . . You didn't have to be; their bosses didn't have to be. If they got brains and push, they won't want to be workmen, they'll want to be something better. The country'll give them a chance to be something better if they'll try to make something of themselves. That's the way it's always been in this country, and that's the way it'll go on." He raised his voice. "What right you got to stand there and discourage them, what right you got to tell them that the way things have always worked in this country is not the right way when you can see how much the country has done, how far it's come from the beginning? What's the country ever done to you that you should tell lies about it? Jesus Christ!—seems to me you're no better than a traitor!" The wild words tumbled out of his mouth, he could not stop them.

His father came down the room towards him, and Al stood and watched him coming, thinking: Why didn't I keep my trap shut? but glaring, nevertheless, as Marius came up to him and pushed his chest sharply with his hand, and said: "Get out! You weren't asked here. Get out!"

When the door closed behind his son, Marius went back and began to talk again, but he saw they were not listening to him. He kept on doggedly, and at last when he finished and asked whether there were any more questions, a dull silence answered him, and then Louie and Amby got up and came up to him and said good-night. He murmured to them that they were going to have cider and doughnuts now and talk a little more, but they said they were sorry, they had to go. And then the others came awkwardly forward, and they had to go, too.

The wind was driving a flurry of snow down the street as Al headed for the street-car. He walked along furiously, and mumbled to himself: "I've stayed in his house too long. I got to cut loose, go out on my own. Get married, get a family of my own." He thought of Hilda. "She'll say 'yes' if I ask her. I know she

will." With sudden resolve he quickened his step. He would ask her. Right away.

He came to the corner, and turned down Hamblin Street. The windows of the Turk's place glowed yellow in the blue-black night, and he went in to phone, giving Paul Sakarian a quick "hello" as he went by the soda fountain. But when he got inside the telephone booth, he remembered that Hilda was sick in bed with flu. He stood irresolute a moment, and then called Dave Bandler.

Harriet answered. "I'm sorry, Al," she told him, "he's gone out—gone down to the fights at the Washington A. C. That colored boy, you know, Indie Whipple, the one that works for his father, is having a big fight tonight, and he asked Dave to second him."

"I'll go down and pick Dave up there," Al said.

"Come home with him after the fights," she asked him. "We'll have some sandwiches and some of his home-brew." She laughed. "I warn you—it's terrible."

He said good-night and hung up. As he went past the soda fountain, Paul Sakarian stretched his heavy body over the counter and said: "A col' night, Halbert. Have a hot choc'lit."

"No, I'm in a hurry—going to the fights," Al told him.

When he got off the trolley, he hurried the two blocks down Harrison Street to the Washington A. C. But there was plenty of time. He had to get in line for a ticket, and he waited in the cold draughty lobby, stamping his feet and blowing on his hands like the rest, while the line shuffled forward. He looked around for someone he knew to sit with, and saw old John Cantrell, buttoned up to his ears, a big gray muffler riding out of the top of his coat collar, and with him Connell the councilman, his son-in-law. Al caught the old man's eye, and said: "Night out, Mr. Cantrell?" They shook hands.

"How's your Pa, Albert?" the old man asked as they moved forward with the crowd.

"Just the same," Al said. "Hasn't changed a bit."

"Country still not moving ahead fast enough for him?" Francis asked, smiling.

Al shrugged. "Yeah. . . . And he and I don't see eye to eye about speeding it up, either." He managed a short laugh.

After a little pause while the crowd carried them forward to the doors of the hall, the old man said in a low voice: "Be good to him, Albert. Try not to cross him, he's not a young man anymore."

"No," said Al, "I won't," but his heart felt like lead, and he suddenly realized, taking in the weathered face at his shoulder, that his father, too, was getting old, getting tired. He felt ashamed and bitter. "I'm a damn fool," he muttered to himself.

He'd bought himself a good seat, and as he sat down he saw that the preliminaries were still on. A couple of clumsy boys were flailing away at each other in the ring, and the house hooted at them continuously as they tangled and clinched while Shevlin, the referee, with weary patience unknotted them.

"Trouble is," Al said to himself, "I'm too much like him—stubborn and thickheaded and excitable. Just like him, and I think just the opposite of him. That's a hell of a note. . . . No use kidding myself—time to get married, time to start out for myself."

The man sitting on his left said: "A fine pair of bums, hey?" nodding at the panting boys in the ring.

"They smell, all right," Al said.

"But the main go is gonna be a riot," the other said. "The nigger's gonna get his head tore off, and everybody in town is gonna be happy."

"Why?" Al asked. "What've they got against him?"

"He's too Goddamn uppity for a nigger, is one reason why. They tell me he even tosses his manager around. His manager's a white man, the nigger oughta show him some respect, y'know what I mean?" He bounced up suddenly and snapped out in the general direction of the ring: "C'mon, *fight*, y'dirty bums!"

"Listen," Al said, "they got this colored boy all wrong. He's a good kid. I used to go to grammar school with him."

"Yeah? Well, he musta turned mean since then, bud. All these half-breeds turn out mean." He peered expertly through the gray-

blue haze of cigarette smoke, and jerked his head towards the ring. "Jes's, what punks," he groaned.

"What do you mean?" Al asked. "What do you mean—half-breeds?"

"The nigger," the other said. "He's been workin' for this Jew junkman for years, and the talk around town is he's the Jew's kid." He laughed. "A Jew bastard—a black one."

"It's a lie!" Al said. "A stinking lie. And whoever says it ought to have his head caved in." He glowered at the man.

"Okay, bud. Don't get sore. I'm not sayin' it, I'm just tellin' you what they say."

"Well, you tell them for me it's a Goddamn lie!"

"Jes's, did I say it? I jus' told you what they're sayin', that's all."

Al was still glowering. "Well, you better be careful about passing a story like that around."

"Okay, *okay!* I heard y' the first time, bud." Again he leaped suddenly in his chair, and yelled towards the ring: "Them gloves ain't powder-puffs, y'slobs!"

The crowd cackled with laughter, and a man in the row behind leaned over, and said: "Nice goin', Mac."

The gong rang with a flat final sound, and the fighters drew apart.

"Look—it's a draw," Mac said. "The punks, they oughta be lynched for puttin' on such a lousy go." He hooted with the rest as the fighters and their handlers, their heads lowered, went quickly up the aisle.

But Al did not answer him, did not hear him. Leaning back in his chair while remembrance took hold of his mind, he was thinking of the bunch of them, Indie and Joe and Amby and Dave and Louie and he, playing ball down at the lots or out at Sheridan Park, running races from hydrant to hydrant, picking berries along the bank of the river and going in swimming afterwards, remembering the summer nights around the lamp post up at the corner and the winter nights when they went sliding down the long shining slope of

Laurel Street hill, with the frosty air pinching the nostrils together. He remembered the sidewalks sticky with the maple buds in spring, and the soft dryness of the leaves in autumn when they walked through the gutters, scuffing the leaves in a wave ahead of them.

It was fun, life was easy then before the War, it was slower, softer, there was a fresh, kind, exciting feel in the air, and he grew up thinking it would keep on being the same, as if it was Fourth of July all the time—Fourth of July when something sweet came up out of the American earth into you, something you couldn't lay your finger on, but there all the time, something made out of the history book in grammar school when you read on the white glazed page about the Oregon Trail and The Forty-Niners and the Northwest Territory and the Louisiana Purchase and Alaska bought from Russia for seven million two hundred thousand dollars, the country opening wherever the pioneers touched it, opening up and taking them in, giving them what they needed to make them happy, food and freedom at the same time, the country open to all of the world that wanted to be free—the wops, the hunkies, the yids, the micks, the limeys, the dagoes, the spicks, the square-heads, all of them asking themselves to the country, and then living and working in it, and dying in it, and sometimes, when they had to, dying for it.

Oh, Pa, what's wrong with you that you can't understand it, can't love it? he thought. It was not perfect, of course not, but it was still the best anywhere. Leave it alone, it'll make itself better all the time, the way it has from the beginning, from the first Fourth of July when they made it, the embattled farmers and the Continental Congress and Paul Revere and George Washington. Yes, liking the way it was, the way it is, the way it grew up out of the American ground from the time of the first Fourth of July, and not wanting to hear anything about changing it, hating whoever wanted to change it or any part of it, holding to the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution to keep us all free Americans, every man for himself, but every man for his country because what a man did to help himself helped everyone else in the country,

helped America so that it would go the way it had marked out for itself in 1776, and no one, he would let no one, not even his own father tell him any different. . . .

Fourth of July, when they fired off the dynamite caps against the back of the house, and felt the warm sun on their backs, and the firecrackers popped all morning, and the guns went off up at the Armory, and they went up to the races at the park, and came home, rolling down the green slopes of the park still wet with dew, and hurrying to get to the parade, rushing down the street to get ice cream before the store closed for the parade, and then hearing the drums and the trumpets far off up the Square coming closer and closer, and then the flags coming into sight, floating on the music above the heads of the people, and then the soldiers left-right left-righting it down the street, and the floats and the flags and the music and everybody smiling and cheering and happy—and it was Fourth of July, and it was a wonder you didn't explode like a firecracker with the soft, fresh, exciting feeling of it, yelling hooray hooray hooray while the music going away got softer and softer but never quite died on the warm kind air. . . .

The man beside Al nudged him sharply. "Here comes the nigger!" he said. "Boy, listen to 'em!" The yells and catcalls echoed and re-echoed, and Mac hooted with them until Al gripped his arm.

"Shut up! For Christ's sake, shut up!" he said.

"Okay, bud," Mac told him. "Don't get sore. I f'got he was your friend."

"Give him a break," Al mumbled. "He's an American, too, isn't he? He's a citizen, an American citizen."

"Sure, sure," Mac said soothingly. He rose from his chair. "There he goes!" he exclaimed, and Al, craning his neck, saw Indie Whipple in an old blue bathrobe, moving slowly down the aisle, smiling a little to himself, his eyes half-closed. Behind him, with his head down and his shoulders hunched up a little as if he feared a blow, went Jack Smith, carrying a rolled bunch of towels and a water bottle. Dave Bandler followed them, grinning self-consciously, his curly hair wetted down, his long narrow nose crink-

ling up at the stench of sweat and staling smoke. When they got to the ringside, the yelling died down, and then a roar of approval went up as Kid Walters and his handlers came down the other aisle.

"Boy, he'll kill the nigger!" Mac said. "Look't the build on him. He'll tear the nigger apart!"

The announcer held his hand up and bellowed: "In 'is corner a local boy, Frankie Whipple known as The Black Tiger, weight two hunnert and four"—with weary resignation he waited till the boos died down—"and in 'at corner Kid Walters, the pride of Chicago, weight two hunnert and eleven. . . . Ten rounds to a decision."

The referee called the two men into the center of the ring for their instructions. Indie looked thin beside the squat Walters who came forward with his eyes fixed on Indie's chest, not raising his head while Shevlin rapidly gave them their instructions. They went back to their corners. In the taut moment of quiet before the gong, a shrill voice yelled: "Kill the nigger, Kid!" and then the gong sounded, and they came out for the first round.

Indie went in slowly with his mind made up to keep cool, to box carefully, to feel his man out.

Smitty had pleaded with him: "F'Christ sake, Frankie, what's the use of all the boxin' you been learnin' if you jus' go in there and swing your head off! Go in and box 'im for a while, see what he's got—'n' remember we got plenty bet on this fight."

He came out, shuffling a little, his chin well down, looking Walters over, noting the humped muscles of the shoulders and the plate of muscle across the chest, saying to himself: "Mighty powe'ful lookin' boy," his eyes watching the white boy's light unaimed eyes.

Walters moved in, and then hooked his left heavily towards Indie's head, but Indie was going away with the punch, and recovering easily, jabbed twice, flicking the other's nose. Walters charged in low, his head down, swinging with both hands, and Indie tried to uppercut him with his right as he came in, but the blow glanced off the other's collarbone, and they went into a tight clinch, Wal-

ters's gloves rubbing furiously against the black body, trying for clearance to jolt Indie's belly.

In the moment before Shevlin stepped forward to break them, Indie heard the other's voice in his ear: "You stink, you nigger bastard. I'm gonna murder you, nigger bastard!" It was the first time another fighter had cursed him in the ring, and he broke out as the referee's hand touched his shoulder and then drove back fast towards Walters, the muscles of his legs uncoiling like springs, his right hand darting towards the other's round jaw. But Walters moved in under the punch and clinched again, and said in his cold flat voice: "I'm gonna slaughter you, you black sonofabitch." Coming out of the clinch, his gloves lifted showily high at the referee's touch, he rasped the heel of his glove across Indie's right eye, and Indie felt a stab of burning pain as if his eyelid had been torn off. A hot hard rage flamed in his mind, his jaws clenched in the spasm of hate, and he plunged towards the white man, his right hand cocked for murder, his left dropped low.

It was what Walters wanted. He was set as Indie came in. Indie saw the glove coming, but his guard was late going up, and he felt a dull explosion in his head as Walters's right chopped him between the eyes. Then it was as if a black curtain had been pulled down over his mind. It seemed like a long, long time until he felt the rough canvas under his back and saw the referee's arm swinging like a white wavering flag above his face.

Far away he heard the count: "Four—Five—Six," and then he was up on his right knee, shaking his head from side to side, feeling his shaky balance going, getting ready to puke. "Seven"—the distant voice said—"Eight," and suddenly everything was in focus again, and he saw Dave Bandler's pale face, his mouth throwing words at him that he could not hear in the thick wave of noise pouring in from the crowd, and at "Nine" he was on his feet and falling into a clinch as Walters tried to jolt him again, and he heard Walters's voice once more: "That's just the beginnin', you black bastard."

But he had learned his lesson. He had enough sense to hang on. He would not get caught again, he told himself. Now that he was

on his feet, he felt light and cool; it would not hurt to let the white boy think he was more badly hurt than he was. By the end of the round he even began to get the feel of the other's fighting style—a slow heavy rhythm, a locking and unlocking of tension as if Walters had to get set and relax, get set and relax as he fought. "This boy's muscle-bound," Indie said to himself. "I got his number now." The gong rang, ending the round, and he went to his corner.

Dave calmly fixed up his eyelid, but Smitty was wild. "Y'crazy dope, y'lost your head! He's a dirty fighter! What's he sayin' to you? I told y' to box him!" Indie sucked at the water bottle and flexed his lips over his teeth, getting ready to slip in the mouthpiece again.

"You all right?" Dave asked him, and Indie said: "I got his number."

He was surprised when he came out at the gong for the second round to find his island beach rising in his mind, and he was happy at its coming as a sign of good luck while he went forward, watching the other's muscles knot together at his approach. His body's too heavy for his feet, Indie thought, and then, seeing how high the other carried his guard, leaped in swiftly and hooked his left hand to the wide belly. He heard the other's breath go "Oof!", and he smiled, stepping back and taking the heavy counter like a blow from a club on his upraised left glove. He drove in hard towards the body again, but, as the other dropped his guard, shifted quickly, sidestepped, and belted the white boy a glancing blow across the ear.

Walters jumped in close and ground his heel across Indie's instep. "Black bastard," he said, "your mother was a whore!"

Indie whacked him in the belly again, and as the other backed away saw with pleasure the red welts showing on the white skin. "I got your number," he mumbled through the mouthpiece. "I got your number, white boy. I'm gonna cut myself a piece of steak off you. I'm gonna cut it quick, too."

Walters's lowered head butted against Indie's chest and carried him back against the ropes, while his right hand curved around

Indie's back, pounding at the kidneys, short and sharp. Indie moved sideways on the ropes, slipping away, and the white boy snapped his head up hard under Indie's chin, jarring him so that his eyes watered. I never seen such a dirty fighter, Indie thought, and again hooked hard to the other's wide belly.

Walters went to work on Indie's bad eye, jabbing at it, making the best of Indie's smooth counters, but working steadily at the eye, and towards the end of the round catching it squarely so that the blood began to ooze down again from the lid.

Smitty said: "He's hard as a rock in the belly. F'Christ sake, shoot at his chin before you're blind! . . . You feel okay?"

"I c'n take him with one eye, too," Indie said. "I got his number, I'm gonna c'llect on it now." He had an island to buy, and this was the best purse he had ever fought for. Besides, he had laid out two hundred dollars around town on himself, most of it even money, but some two to three. He drew his lungs full, and felt the smooth pounding of his heart. Then the gong beat, and he came out of his corner quickly.

Slowly the fight began to go his way. He set its rhythm, and Walters had to follow, always a beat behind, always a blow and a pace late, following Indie's lead, dancing to Indie's tune. By the end of the seventh round, Walters's body from the heart down to the line of his trunks was puffy and welted. The blows lay on his belly neatly packed in layers so that Indie could see them almost as if they were piled up on one another, pink on pink, red on red. Indie's right eye was puffed and swollen and oozing blood, but the left was unmarked, and he watched the white boy's guard drop bit by bit to cover his heart against Indie's short jolting hooks.

"Couple more rounds, I got him," Indie said to himself, and every time they clinched, he mumbled behind his mouthpiece: "How you like the black bastard now, white boy? Huh? How you like him now?", and Walters grunted, now trying his butting trick in every clinch, paying no attention to the referee's warnings, his look fixed in bloodshot fascination on Indie's swollen eye as if it alone were the vulnerable place, this eye alone, to be blotted out, to

be squashed, smashed flat into the socket.

"Blind black bastard, blind nigger bastard," he muttered.

"How your belly feel?" Indie mumbled and broke away, his chin high and lifted back, coming out of the clinch.

A minute before the round ended, Indie, bouncing off the ropes, fainted high with his left and drove in a straight hard right just above the other's belt line. Walters tottered, drew himself up, his face twisted into a grimace of pain, and he went down on both knees, clasping his gloves over his crotch, rolling his eyes up at the referee, his lips making the word, "Foul." The referee hesitated just for an instant, then his arm went up, and in the bedlam of howls that broke from the crowd, he began his count. Indie in a neutral corner stood relaxed, his gloves held low, grimacing in contempt of the fake that Walters was trying.

At "Seven," Walters was on his feet, and as Indie came to him, lurched into a clinch.

The referee, pulling them out of it, muttered to Indie: "You better watch the low punches, Whipple," and Indie, shoving Walters away, nodded, certain that he had not fouled him, but suddenly aware of the danger in the body-punching he had been doing, realizing that another fake might be more successful next time.

When the gong rang at the end of the round, he said to Dave as he sat down on his stool: "I gotta be careful, this boy's an actor, as well as a fighter."

"F'Christ sake, will y'listen to me now?" Jack Smith said. "He's carryin' his guard down at his bellybutton, will y'work to the jaw now? F'Christ sake, y'wanna lose on a phony foul? How about our dough, how about the bets?" in the meantime rubbing Indie's legs frantically, his full sallow cheeks turned away in disgust from the strong smell of Indie's sweat. "Will y'listen to me, f'Christ sake?"

Just before the gong sounded, Dave Bandler, working carefully on Indie's eye, said: "This eye is in a bad way, Indie. You better do somethin' soon."

Indie nodded, coming up off his stool. He meant to finish Walters

off in this round. He was going to take from Walters, as he had taken from the others he had fought, a little more surety of the loneliness, the freedom he was going to buy with his island. Because, he told himself, moving lightly across the ring, when a man had an island far away from everybody, where nobody could reach him, touch him, hurt him, he was free. He could always be free if he was alone.

He started peppering away at Walters's face, stepping lightly around the tired white boy, keeping out of clinches, watching for a shot at the round jaw, jabbing at it, hooking at it, driving straight rights and lefts at it. Walters's mouth hung open, his chest moved up and down with his panting, and his legs could not move with his body. His guard moved up until he was almost peering out from under his gloves; his nose was white at the nostrils, his eyes fixed, his face blank, dumb, like an animal's in the moment before the sledge falls. Over Walters's shoulder Indie saw the white boy's manager rolling and unrolling the towel in his hands. He's going to throw it in, he thought, and with the thought he turned Walters sidewise with a left hook to the cheekbone, so that for an instant the belly turned up and to him, the way a fish's belly begins to twist up in the water when it is dying, and Indie's right straightened and drove down deep into it like a spear, so that the body folded down over the glove with the shock of the punch. Then Indie was pulling back and away, and Walters was falling slowly forward, without tottering, plunging face downwards towards the canvas. Just before he hit, his arms came forward and braced him off the floor. He hit hard just the same, and Shevlin began his count. At "Three," Walters pushed himself with effort back from the floor, and wavered up on his knees, his legs bent under him. His rosin-smeared gloves came frantically to his crotch, and he turned his twisted face up to the lights. At "Six," his lips made "Foul," and his gloves dug into his groins as if fumbling at the spearhead embedded in them. So he stayed fixed, his contorted face turned straight up towards the lights so that everyone in the place could see his agony.

"Foul!" they roared. "Foul! Foul!"

"Foul!" Mac yelled, and turned to Al, gripping him by the arm. "The black bastard fouled him, d'ya see it, d'ya see it?" a little thread of spit running from the corner of his distended mouth. "Lookit in the ring!" he panted, and Al saw that the ring was crowded with the handlers of both fighters, standing in a ragged circle around the still-kneeling Walters, whose manager, gesticulating at the referee in accusation of Indie, suddenly whirled, and seizing the water bottle from one of his fighter's seconds swung it savagely down on Indie's head. The bottle shattered, and Indie staggered. Dave Bandler wrenched at the manager's outstretched arm, and then the ring filled with a compact struggling mass of men, with more clambering up from the ringside.

The crowd went wild. "Kill the nigger! Kill the yid! Kill the nigger! Kill the yid!"

Then the cops came charging down the center aisle, broke through the massed crowd at the ringside, and clambered up to clear the ring.

As the cops escorted Indie and Dave and Smitty up the aisle towards the dressing-room, the crowd standing on the chairs cursed them. "Black bastard! Dirty yid!"

After a minute, Al moved out of his chair and into the aisle. A cop stood at the door of the dressing room. When Al came up to him, he saw that it was Sergeant Mike Sheehan, and he said: "Jes's, Mike, was anybody hurt?"

"Yeah," Mike said, "they cut the boy's head open with the bottle. The Doc's fixin' him up."

"Lemme in there," Al said, but just then the door opened, and Jack Smith and Dave Bandler came through it slowly, helping Indie along. His feet dragged a little, and Al saw that there was a bloody bandage over his head. Dave's face was bruised, and he was pale.

"Lemme help, Dave," Al said and Dave told him to take the car key out of his pocket and go out and get the car started.

"You'll come home with us, huh, Al?" he asked. "I got to put some stitches in Indie's scalp."

They drove home. When they came into the house, Harriet was frightened, but controlled herself, and they told her quickly what had happened. Then they all crowded into Dave's office.

"It's a bad cut," he said. "It's going to hurt some, Indie."

"Go ahead," Indie said, his face gray under its black shine. Smitty, his eyes blinking, looked away, but Al, with admiration, watched Dave's blunt sure fingers clean the ugly triangular cut in Indie's scalp and swiftly stitch it up, while Harriet, her hair glinting under the light, held a bottle of salts to Indie's flaring nostrils.

When it was over, Dave told Indie to get to bed right away and called a cab for him and Smitty. After they went, Al was going, too, but they urged him to stay.

"You've got to help Dave eat these sandwiches up," Harriet said. "And I still say his home-brew is terrible."

While they were eating, Harriet wanted to hear everything that had happened at the fight club, and they both told her.

"Gee, for a while there," Al said, "I was afraid there might be a lynching."

"They certainly went wild," Dave said. "Did you hear them yelling 'Kill the yid,' too? . . . Indie's a hometown boy, so I can't see why they should get so hot about him winning."

"Did they really yell that?" Harriet said.

"What?" Dave asked.

"You know," she told him. "About killing the yid."

"Yeah, they did," Al said.

"Well, then I don't think you ought to do it any more—being Indie's second, I mean," she asserted. "It's hard enough for you now, and you know it."

Al, munching a sandwich, leaned back in the overstuffed chair and watched them. He was thinking: This is nice. This is swell. I'll do this too: get married and have a place of my own. With pleasure he listened to Harriet's worried voice, gently chiding her husband.

"I know," Dave said, "but this was his first big fight. Indie—well, it's hard to explain—he's almost like one of the family, if you know

what I mean. We're the only friends he's got maybe. He's a lone wolf. . . . Someone told me that Indie nearly killed a man once because he said something against my father. So if he asks me to second him, I can't quit on him."

"Well, if he's such a friend, you could explain to him, couldn't you?" Harriet said. She looked over at Al. "Couldn't he, Al?"

"I don't get it," Al said. "I mean why? Just because some scum start yelling names at him? . . . Well, honest, Harriet, I don't think that's a reason."

She said to Dave: "Haven't you told him?"

"Oh, now, Harriet." Dave shook his head at her. "We don't have to bother Al about that."

"What is it?" Al asked. "Tell me, Harriet."

She shrugged. "If Dave hasn't mentioned it you. . . ."

Dave leaned forward and said rapidly: "Oh, all right, Harriet, I'll say it. . . . It's this business of being a Jew, you know." He spoke rather stiffly, frowning a little when he said the word "Jew." "Well, calling me 'dirty yid,' I mean that's not so bad. You expect something like that once in a while. . . . But aside from that, things are not going so well with me. In my practice, I mean. Of course, I got some patients, but they're nearly all poor Jews—the rich ones go to rich doctors—and the others, well they're the people who've run up bills with other doctors, so at last they come to see me and run up a bill with me. So Harriet thinks it's because I'm a Jew I can't get really started, that people won't come because I'm a Jew. . . . Prejudice. So I tell her she's wrong. I tell her it's hard for any young doctor to get started nowadays. That's all there is to it, Al. After all, people would rather go to an experienced man than to some squirt like me just out of the hospital and the army. It's only natural," he said. He smiled. "How d'you like my home-brew, Al? Pretty good, huh?"

Al grinned. "It tastes like medicine," he said, and turned to Harriet. "I think Dave's right. Gosh, it isn't as though Dave were a stranger in town. And he's an American like me, like everybody else."

"Well, there're mighty few feel the way you do, Al, I'll tell you that," Harriet said. "Not that Dave and I carry a chip on our shoulders the way some Jews do, but you'd be surprised if you could see it from our angle to know how many people wouldn't so much as look at us just because we're Jews."

Dave frowned at her. "Ah, now, Harriet, you're getting excited."

"It's true," she asserted, "you know it's true. You don't like to admit it, but it is. . . . It's like your father says." Her voice rose a tone. "You didn't tell Al they wouldn't give you a clinic appointment, did you? Not even in the Flats, in the worst slums. No, you're a Jew, and so you're not good enough even for the people who used to throw rocks at your father on his junk wagon. . . . No, even working for nothing, you're not considered good enough for them."

"All right then," Dave said roughly. "What d'you want me to do? We'll pack up and go to Palestine. Would that suit you?"

Harriet put her glass down. "Why not? We could go when your folks go."

"Ah, don't be foolish," Dave told her. "Besides we don't have to drag Al into our arguments, do we?"

But Al leaned forward with interest and asked: "What's this, Dave? Your folks going to Palestine? To live?"

"Yes," Dave said, "my father's been talking about it ever since the war ended. He wants to go and settle down there. Buy an orange grove or a farm or something and live out his life there. He's got the idea in his head that he can't be really free and happy unless he does. And he's won my mother over, too. I wouldn't be surprised if they went mighty soon. I've argued and argued with him, but it's no use. He's made his mind up." He sighed. "You can't imagine, Al, what a difference there is between us. I mean, when I tell him he's an American, an American citizen like me, like you, he shrugs at me. And when he begins to spout to me about the Holy Land, the home of the Jew, the only place in the world where a Jew can be happy because it's the purpose of God that the Jews must live there after all these years of exile—well, I just can't make

him understand what I feel about this country being a holy land for me, too." He looked a little embarrassed. "So we can't agree. He's a Jew, and I'm an American, that's what it amounts to. I grew up all my life here, and he didn't." Earnestly, his face flushed, he went on: "I always wanted to feel I was a real part of the country's history. Sometimes I wished that my folks had been pioneers here, like the Cantrells or some of the others. Even when I was still a kid, I felt it. I wished that they had lived out all their lives in this country—had pioneered, had built cabins, rode through the valleys, pulled over the hills, fought the Indians, dug up the ground, lived and died and been buried entire in this country so I could say: 'I'm in it, a part of it already, my grandfather's bones are in its ground.' Then I thought: I'll make myself a part of it. I'll live into it and let it live in me, my kids'll have a father who was all American, who was born here and will die here and be buried here." He turned to Harriet. "That's why I won't go to Palestine. This is my country. I want it to be my children's country, and my children's children's country so they can say: 'Grampa was in the army.' I'm part of American history now—I fought in an American war, and this is my country, and here I stay. I'll make my place in it the way other Americans have made their place in it. . . . That's what it amounts to," he said to her. "You know what I mean, huh, Al?"

"Listen," Al told them, "I got the same problem. I mean my old man and I argue the same way. Only it's harder for me." He told them about his father's meeting earlier in the evening and what had happened. "So now I'm almost afraid to go home." He laughed. "My old man's just like yours, Dave. They both got every reason to be happy in this country, but neither one is satisfied. I don't know why. Your father's afraid of it, and mine is sore at it. God knows what they want it to be. Heaven itself, I guess." He pushed away from the table and pulled his stocky body up. "If only I could make him see it my way," he said. "But I can't talk the way he does—he's got it all worked out in his head—what's wrong with the country, I mean. And all I've got is my feeling for it, and it's harder to say what you feel than what you think. I found that out. . . .

Tonight while I was watching the fights, I was remembering the fun we used to have when we were kids. Particularly Fourth of July. Remember? My grandfather told me once that people ought to feel all the time the way they do on the Fourth of July. Well, I do. And I'm going home to tell my father so. But I'm afraid to go. . . . Gosh, Dave, seems to me we're fighting the Civil War all over again. You and your old man, me and mine."

Harriet brought in his hat and coat, and Dave offered to drive him home, but Al said: "No, I'll walk. I want to put it off long's I can. Thanks just the same."

He walked along through the cold quiet night, his footsteps clacking loudly on the sidewalks, and wondered what would happen when he got home. "If the old man's as sore as I think he is, it'll be some battle," he said to himself. He looked around at the dark silent houses, row after row of them stretching away down the streets, sleeping quietly under the high, icy yellow moon, their roofs sharp and black against the deep sky. This was the way it was meant to be from the beginning, he thought. Quiet and peaceful and safe. It's the Fourth of July made it this way; it's the way we ought to keep it. All I can do is tell him how I feel. I can't help it, I'll tell him. No matter how sore he is, I'll tell him.

When he turned up the walk to the house, he saw that it was all dark except for the night light in the hall. He guessed that his mother and his father were asleep, and he felt relief and disappointment at the same time. We got to have it out some time, he thought. When he got in, however, he glanced into the living-room and saw in his armchair, the dark bulk of his father asleep in the pale yellow light that fell through the curtains. Before he waked him, he looked with pity at the deep lines in his father's broad brows, the heavy triangle that ran from the nostrils to the corners of the mouth, the dark silver shine of the hair. He's tired, Al thought. God, I don't want to fight him. It's better for me to get out. Then he touched his father's shoulder, and Marius woke at once.

"Albert?" he said huskily.

"Yes, Pa."

"Put on the light, Albert."

Al lighted the table lamp and gazed anxiously into his father's face. Marius blinked. There was no anger on his face, Al saw, only a look of determined patience.

"Let's have a little talk, Albert," his father said.

"Okay, Pa." He felt a little like a kid again when his father had had to give him a quiet bawling out. Before Marius could say anything, he blurted: "I shouldn't have busted out at you tonight, Pa. . . . But I just got carried away." Now it's coming, he thought, and stiffened for his father's words.

"There's just one thing I want to say to you, Albert," Marius said. "Once and for all, let me go my own way." His voice sharpened. "You had no right to break up my meeting no matter how you felt. Some day something good will come of these meetings." He leaned forward and looked into Al's face. "I'm planting a seed, a good seed. Some day it will flower."

"Okay, Pa," Al said, "okay. I won't butt in again. . . . Just the same, I was thinking—" He hesitated, and looked at his father.

"All right, Albert," Marius said impatiently, "let's have it. You might as well get it out of your system."

"It's not about your ideas, Pa. It's just the way you put them over. Talking, I mean." He said with more assurance: "Talking may make you feel good, Pa, but it isn't what those people want, it just makes them unhappier. They ask you what to do, and you just talk to them. The way you did tonight when Louie Davis asked you what to do."

He waited what seemed a long time for his father's answer. Then Marius said in a low voice: "You think words are not enough, Albert, is that it? I mean if you were one of them, what would you . . . ?"

"Me?" Al said. "If something was hurting me, Pa, I would want to fight it. I know I wouldn't be talking about it. When you come right down to it, what good's talk? It's action that counts. Why, in the army—" He stopped abruptly.

His father stood, leaning forward a little, his head cocked to one side. Then he laughed. "Action, Albert? I think you're right. After all these years, we've finally agreed on something. Action, yes."

His father's laugh sounded strange, and made Al feel uneasy. "Don't get me wrong, Pa," he said quickly. "You got a right to talk, to say what you like."

"Yes," Marius said in a low voice, "I got a right."

Al stared at his father, suddenly afraid for him. "Pa?" he said.

His father raised his head. "Time for bed, Albert," he said. "Good-night."

Al said slowly: "Good-night, Pa." When he was in bed he thought: He must've promised Ma not to fight with me. I could tell. . . . I got to get out. I will. Before we get to hate each other, I will. . . . And I'll try to teach my kid something different. . . .

SITTING in front of the fireplace in the living room, they had talked about the fights for a time. Finally John yawned and got up. "I'm going to bed, Francis. Can't keep my eyes open."

Francis, sitting deep in his easy chair, his face in shadow, said: "I wish—wait a minute, I wanted to talk to you. . . . There's a heaviness in me."

The old man turned towards him. "I know, Francis," he said. "But I can't help you." He sat down before the fire again. "You and Josie'll have to work it out yourselves." He shook his head slowly from side to side. "I've talked to her, Francis, but I got nowhere."

"You know what it's been like?" Francis said slowly. "Like being in Hell. Ah, it would be different if I could change, if I could stop feeling for her the way I do. Sure, then, what would it matter? There's many a family lives in peace without love. But what I've got is a love that gives me no peace. No peace at all. So that I can't sleep even." He grunted heavily, and John Cantrell felt his son-in-law's misery like a weight on his own heart.

He did not want to hear any more. "It'll come out all right, Francis," he said. "You got to be patient." But he felt no confidence

in what he was saying, he could not summon up assurance to strengthen his voice, and his words fell away as if they had not been spoken, as if they had not been heard.

Francis sat forward in his chair, and the firelight moved on his face. "It wasn't as if we were a couple of young kids just starting. No, we were a couple of grown people, a man and a woman full grown. We knew something about the world. At least, that was the way it seemed to me. I was a proud man in those days, proud of being married to a woman like her, an intelligent woman and not one of these embroiderin' laddydah ladies. And I wanted her to know she'd married a man who could do things, not some mere drudging pipsqueak. And so I babbled to her. Holy Joseph, how I babbled and boasted! Out of my own mouth I damned myself to this misery."

"That's enough now, Francis," the old man said. "Why don't you go up to bed, get some rest?"

"For how would I guess what was in her?" Francis said. "A pride beyond shaking, a hope beyond enduring, a faith beyond compromising."

"A love beyond changing," John said low-voiced. "Don't forget that, Francis. . . ."

Francis stirred restlessly. "A man can't be an angel. I thought everyone with sense knew that. I never questioned it. What I did, it seemed to me, I had to do in the way of my day's work. I couldn't make my terms with the world, the world made its terms with me. That's the way it's always been. I thought everybody knew that, I thought everybody comes to know it. I thought Josie must know it, too. But she doesn't. God knows how many things I told her that she's written down as the black marks of my soul, looking upon me as the tool that other men use for their dirty work—a hypocrite and a liar and a thief. And all the time I lived, I thought, full in the eyes of God, avoiding the commission of sins, and leaving the sins I found in myself in the confessional. . . . No less than what she does herself. But she asks me to be more than God Himself does. And it angers me and saddens me and maybe will kill me. Yes, kill

me," he said so loudly and harshly that John started, and mumbled hastily:

"Now, Francis, you mustn't—"

"Taken the heart out of me entirely is what she's done. Made my work something dirty so that there's no satisfaction in it for me now. In God's name, why? I want to do my work and be happy doing it. But she won't have it—no, I must give up everything I've made for myself in sweat and struggle to be what she wants. And I won't, I can't give in to her unless I go out of this world. A man can't be an angel! Can he now?"

"No," the old man said, feeling a deep unhappy ache. "No, he can't, Francis."

Francis was quiet, and they sat in front of the fire a little while longer. Then the old man said good-night and went slowly out of the room and upstairs.

But once in his room he did not go to bed. He walked about and paused by the windows and looked out five or six times at the scene of moonlit snow and the roofs of houses beyond the bare branches of the maples in the backyard. Distant but clear, the switch-engine in the yards down by the Flats hooted steadily, and he listened to it absent-mindedly. Things were bad with Josie and Francis, he was thinking, and such a spasm of misery gripped him suddenly that he exclaimed aloud: "It's beyond my fixing!" and then looked aimlessly around the room, remembering how pleased he had been long ago when Josie had come into the room and told him that she was going to marry Francis.

He sat for a while by the window, staring out into the night. The house was deeply quiet. After a time he rose and began his wandering circuit of the room again, but drew up finally at his desk, thinking vaguely: I wish it were all over, I wish it were done. As if it had happened long ago and come to a finish so that a man might read about it or think about it without hurting himself at every turn of his thought. He sat down at the desk and drew from it his close-packed manuscript. When he held it in his hand, feeling its soft bulk springing under his fingers, he felt better, as if the

life he had resurrected in it were a shield between him and the life that was pressing so hard upon him now. He held it so for a minute, and then leafed through the pages until he came upon what he had last written, and began to read:

Buoyed by their victory in the War, the men of Persepolis returned with new spirit to the labor of field and factory. They began to realize as they never had before the inexhaustible richness of their land, and they turned vigorously to the getting not only of the necessities of life, but of those luxuries which hitherto had seemed to belong only to those few unusually favored by Fortune. To the primal beauty of Persepolis's native groves and fields were added the handiwork of their masters, by whom they were made to yield to hundreds and eventually to thousands the richer harvest of industry and commerce, improvement and progress.

Chief of the industries of Persepolis was the iron and steel works founded in 1825 by Philip Cantrell, James Creasey, Frederick MacAllister, and Moses Tandy. From the Iron Works came a steady stream of plow-irons, stove fronts, builders' hardware, steel rails, etc., etc. So, too, from the other manufactories of the city came other products whose manufacture gave employment to hundreds and whose use brought an easing of labor and a saving of strength to thousands.

Yet with this good came evil, too. Men became frantic with the vision of ease, comfort, and luxury that the uses of industry raised before them. Like children suddenly confronted by innumerable toys they grasped avidly at all that lay before them, eager to enjoy all at once their new-found riches. The result was that in many quarters of American life its virtues became its vices: its desire for comfort grew to a lust for luxury; its love of freedom, an exercise of selfishness; its yearning for justice, a dependence on legal machinery; its use of strength, an abuse of power. Thus from the very virtues that created the country came the vices that corrupted it, and no man could easily say then or now at what point the virtue ended and the vice began, for the corruption came not from with-

out, but from within, not from any active source of evil, but from a falling away from the good. So can be explained those black pages in Persepolis's history in the years following the War when men stole from the public treasury what they could not get by private industry, when men wrung their wealth from their fellows without compunction and without mercy. But these deeds and the men who committed them shall go unnamed in this history. It is not my part to pass judgment again upon those whom time and posterity have already judged, whose names are long since forgotten in the lustre of the good who made this city, or else are remembered with shame and loathing. . . .

At this point in his reading he rose, troubled, and went to the window, pressing his forehead against the cold glass. He had debated a long time with himself whether he should write into his chronicle the record of evil as well as of good. Should he not, to be honest, have told everything? he asked himself again. And yet, to what good? When a tree grows strong, when its fruits are sweet, would it not be shameful to point out its withered twigs, its few bitter unripe fruits rotting on the rich soil? No, he thought, rubbing his forehead slowly back and forth along the cool pane, enough to say that with strength there must be weakness; with ripeness, some rottenness. What good to stir up the weak, corrupt dust?—better to point to the springing strength, the fruitful growth. . . . “Just the same I'm a softhearted old fool,” he said half-aloud as he turned back from the window and picked up the manuscript again:

By 1873 the wild grasping for wealth and power, the stretching of an inadequate national currency to meet the unprecedented demands of speculators had slowly weakened the confidence and strength of the nation so that with the collapse of Jay Cooke's company, the whole commercial structure of the nation collapsed, bringing ruin and misery to thousands and thousands over the length and breadth of the nation. Most heavily the blow fell upon the laborer and the small business man whose little savings were

swept away in the vast flood of failure. In Persepolis, the shutdown of industry was nearly complete; the Iron Works, Finley's Tannery, the Crane & Trimble Lumber Mill, the Indian Head Brass Foundry, and many smaller manufactories were forced to close.

The terrible winter of 1874-1875 found lines of men, women, and children standing before the churches and parish-houses of the city, waiting patiently for the bread and soup that was doled out to them. Children perished from the cold in unheated houses, and men faced with death from starvation for their families turned to steal the necessities of life they could no longer earn. Crimes in the city became so frequent and violent that many citizens did not dare to venture out upon the city's streets after nightfall.

The laboring men of the city became restless and finally aggressive. They felt that they had been duped, tricked by those upon whom they depended for their bread. Their hope and faith in the promise of America crumbled, and they turned in misery and despair to take simultaneously their bread and their vengeance in the great railway strike of 1877, which beginning in Pittsburgh, soon reached into Persepolis. Beginning in June, riotous meetings were held in various portions of the city, the greatest assembly gathering on July 4th in Sheridan Park. This meeting grew so restive and heated that the police force of the city was hardly adequate to restrain the mob, and gave way to the rioters who took possession of factories and the railroad yard, and even burst into places of business, which were wildly plundered. Thousands of dollars' worth of property were destroyed, a disastrous fire swept away the flour mill of the Umfreville brothers, and business generally was prostrated for more than 48 hours until 2 companies of the state militia were sent by Governor Swett at the request of Mayor Alfred L. Rathbone. In the restoration of order by the soldiers, the city witnessed the terrible spectacle of men, some of them recruited from this very city, firing upon their own townsmen, who, in their lack of arms, pelted them with stones and refuse.

As a result of such outbursts, the labor associations, growing rapidly in many parts of the country, recruited a good many work-

ingmen in Persepolis. Some became members of the Greenback-Labor Party, while others joined "The Five Stars," the Knights of Labor, and the National Labor Union.

Yet from the suffering, the strife, and the bloodshed of these panic years, the city emerged with a stronger devotion to right and justice. Looking back now, one sees how important it was, not that there were battles, but that there was a battleground. This, the freedom of the field, is what Americans have always fought for. Their basic right is the right to a battleground. For from the battle, even with its suffering, there has always finally come good, there has always been a step forward in the "pursuit of happiness." And so it will always be so long as Americans fight for the freedom to fight. This is the wellspring which nourishes all our life. I say this because in the panic of 1893, scarcely fifteen years after the cessation of the panic of '73, in this new convulsion of the nation. . . .

The pages slipped from his hand, and he bent forward tiredly over them. He listened. The house was very still. Slowly, in his weariness, while he sat hunched over his chronicle, the past and the present ran together in his mind. In a confused vision of men struggling in the streets, with the flares red as blood glittering over their naked heads, he saw himself and Francis and Josie and the child whirled somehow into the clashing maelstrom of clenched fists and contorted faces and swept away as if on a river backwards spinning into the deep gulf of time, carried away into the blackness of night, their cries growing fainter and fainter, their movements more and more languid until the last yell died away and the last hand appeared fluttering above the broken surface, and vanished. Smoothly the flood came and curling quietly about the people and the houses, the towns and the cities, the countries and the continents, drew them all dreaming towards the invisible, hardly-murmuring gulf. Confusedly he thought: What does it matter then? Why should I struggle? Why should I? . . . seeing the people clotted together like a raft of logs that spins once, whirls about, and plunges down the long even slope of the river . . . the

vanishing, the vanished. Asking himself: Are they really here, the thousands and thousands, the invisible, dreaming now in all the houses of the shadowed city? Answering: They are not here, they seem to have appeared, but already they have gone back into the earth that dreamed them up, dissolved in the night as though the night moving under the stationary stars were a black acid dissolving the flesh and the bones, dissolving the handholds, the footholds of the flesh—the shoes, the clothes, the chairs in the room, the beds in the chambers, the maples of the yard, the cobbles of the street. Only here—striking his hand gently against his brows—here the glow of reality, the undiminished spark, the uncorroded substance, here behind the dissolving skull, here the real, the enduring, the one. The many I have dreamed, unreeling them all, the thin and wavering spectres from the fiery foundry within. . . . Look in the telephone book, call them, see if they are there: call and call for them. The whisper on the wire will tell you of the unanswering, unmoving, unliving . . . the vanishing, the vanished!

He sat up with a start. He heard a child's frightened crying, and it bewildered him for a moment so that he thought he had evoked the cries from his dreaming. Then he heard other voices, the voices of Josie and Francis, and suddenly terrified, he jumped up and went quickly down the hall towards the yellow oblong of light that fell from his grandson's room. "What? . . . what is it?" he exclaimed breathlessly as he went through the door and saw Josie holding the whimpering child in her arms, while Francis, pale, his face drawn, his hair tousled, watched them.

"Nothing, Father. Nothing," she said quietly. "A bad dream maybe, or a little stomach-ache."

"Godalmighty, I got scared. I don't know why," he said.

She put her finger to her lips. "He's going off again. Now don't waken him."

He nodded, his heart beating quietly again, and saw Francis wag his head dazedly. As he went back to his room, he thought: Poor feller, he doesn't know whether he's coming or going. And then, musing on Francis's suffering and Josie's, he said to himself with

conviction: "It's real all right. Here and now. If, like me, they think and suffer, it's real." In his room, taking off his shoes, he said aloud: "Something's got to be done about them. Something. . . ."

Next morning when he went into Harvey's office at the Bank, he did not know what he wanted to say to Harvey about Josie and Francis, but he certainly did not want Harvey to know there was anything wrong between them. Vaguely he was hoping that if he could somehow persuade Harvey to turn Francis loose, then Josie would no longer have any fret about her husband's doing what she called Harvey's dirty work. After a while he said, at a break in their casual talk, in response to Harvey's inquiring look: "I was wondering, Harvey—that is, I came to see you. . . . Well, the whole point is: do you think it's all right for Francis to be working for us and for the city, too?" It sounded weak and clumsy to him, and he was not surprised at the look of wonder on his cousin's face.

"What's it all about, John?" Harvey asked after a moment. "I mean, it seems funny. Here you are, after all these years Francis has handled our work, worrying about it. Sounds to me as if you've been talking to Marius Schaeffer again. Remember the time he—"

The old man didn't like Harvey's indulgent smile. "No," he said sharply, "Marius has got nothing to do with this. It's just that—well, I've been thinking it over. It could make trouble for us maybe. Look at what the *Chronicle* said last month about politicians and business. It was aimed right at us."

Harvey stared at him. "You're not worrying about what the *Chronicle* says, are you? Say, if I worried about such blather as well as everything else, I'd go crazy. A newspaper's a business. It'll stir up excitement over nothing just to keep its circulation going. That's all. So if it's the *Chronicle's* attacks on Connell last month that got you worried, you can just forget the whole thing. The elections are all over, and Francis is still Councilman in spite of the fuss the *Chronicle* made."

"The newspaper upset Josie," John said cautiously.

"Now, that's too bad," Harvey said. He paused. "Now I see. It's Josie, hey?"

A little bewildered at Harvey's quickness, the old man nodded.

"Well," Harvey said, "I know how she must have felt, but after all. . . . You know, if a man is in politics. . . . I mean, what can she expect? And I guess she believes her husband before the newspapers, doesn't she?"

The old man nodded quickly. "Just the same—" he began, but Harvey cut him off short.

"Besides," he said emphatically, "we just couldn't let Francis go now. He's doing a big job right now—it'd be cutting our throats to let him go because Josie gets upset reading a cheap political sheet. "Maybe you don't know," he went on, "that Francis is working for us on something big with Washington." He leaned forward and dropped his voice. "Do you know, John, that we've had a Federal investigator here from Washington, sent here by the Attorney General of the United States, Mr. Palmer himself?"

"But why? What for? I don't—"

"Sure. A Federal man investigating the radicals in this town—maybe your old friend Schaeffer, too, and his activities. I understand that Washington is going to turn loose on the Reds all over the country. When Palmer finishes, there won't be one left. The wartime Sedition Act is still in force, y'know. No, sir, not one left. And it's not going to be next year either. Now," he said, rising, "you just tell Josie not to believe everything she reads in the papers." He laughed abruptly. "And talking of the papers, John, guess who's working on the *Chronicle*? Began just a couple of days ago. Phil! After all his talk about being a writer, I call that rich."

"Well, that still makes him a writer, doesn't it?" the old man said.

"Maybe. But it's quite a tumble for him just the same. My guess is that Gwen finally egged him into taking a regular job instead of mooning in his room all day trying to write poetry." He grinned. "Some poetry, too!"

"I suppose he showed you everything he wrote," John said drily.

"Not a line of it," Harvey said. "But I got a sample just the same. Some of that crazy free-verse stuff. You know." While he talked, he was pulling open a desk drawer and fumbling in it. "Not strictly ethical, of course, but after all I'm the boy's father. . . . I found this up in his wastebasket one day. I thought I had a right. . . . At least he had sense enough to throw it away. Here, read it."

He held out a couple of wrinkled pages to the old man who drew back a little and said: "You shouldn't have done that, Harvey. After all—"

"I know, I know," Harvey said impatiently. "Don't go telling me what I already know. . . . Here, just read it, that's all."

John hesitated, but his curiosity was too much for him. "All right," he said. He took the smudged sheets. THE PHOENIX, he read:

*Now the mist rising up from the river veils the bulk in the
stone and floats the yellow towers back like feathers on the
great gray sky the towers of New York Chicago and St
Louis are phoenix feathers scattered on the sky the wings of
the phoenix are forever stone and from the ashes of the years
no more will rise*

*at Valley Forge a new phoenix hung in the sky the mad-
men cursed their nakedness and hunger their fingers with-
ered in the cold and the blood forsook their shaking bones
but the breath of the phoenix burned in their lungs and the
shadow of its wings fell on their nakedness*

*Cincinnati St Joseph and New Orleans have forgotten the
blood and the littered battlegrounds*

*has forgotten the hot anguish of its birth awaiting only a
familiar death remembering only a stream with no boats a
forest with no trails on the dark horizon a city with no
lights and something crashing down a pyramid or a temple
or a tower falling like a feather slowly down the city falling
slowly down the sky no lights the sky, thick with cold*

*stars and far away a jackal or a hyena or a coyote howling
and howling from far away*

*the towers of New York Cleveland and Chicago are the
darkling stone wings of a sheaf of stone feathers of from the
ashes of the years the phoenix will not rise again*

John handed the wrinkled sheets back.

"Pretty crazy, huh?" Harvey said. "All of a piece with the way he's been since he got back from France."

"It's not finished; he couldn't finish it," the old man said slowly.

"A little punctuation would've helped, maybe," Harvey said. "The thing hasn't even got a period."

"He couldn't put a period to it. It's not finished yet for him."

Harvey said abruptly: "You think I don't know what it's about, don't you? Think I'm a thick-witted fool in everything but business, don't you, John?"

Startled by the change in Harvey's tone, the old man could only stare at him, and Harvey declared: "Sure you do. And so does Phil. I know. But I'll tell you this"—he touched the top of the desk gently with his forefinger—"I'm what Phil was writing about. He doesn't know it yet, and neither do you. But I am. I'm the man you're writing your history about. You go home and read what you've written and see if I'm not. Yes, me, the man who's got no use for poetry, I'm the one the poems and the books are written about. Because I'm the one that makes the history. You and Phil, you just write about it. About me. It's me and my kind made this country, not yours and Phil's. We've made the country rich enough to afford you. But if we'd depended on you. . . ." He laughed and said in an easier tone: "Ah, well. As they say, it takes all kinds to make a world. But the world can dispense with the dreamers like Phil, never miss them. The hard work, the real work, of running the world is never done by people like Phil. No reflection on you, John, of course. You've been through it. You know. But Phil's got to learn. And I'm not worried about him. He will. You'll see."

"I don't think you're a fool, Harvey," John Cantrell told him slowly. "You're smart. But I hope Phil never comes to your way of thinking. He won't. Not now that he's written this. Because he is a different kind, and always will be." He said firmly: "As good as your kind, Harvey. Any day."

Harvey grinned at him maliciously. "Gave you a jolt, didn't I? Well, don't get your dander up. . . . We'll see." He gave John his hand, and said: "No hard feelings?"

"No, of course not. Don't be a fool, Harvey."

Outside in the cold he suddenly shivered. He had got nowhere, he might have known it, as far as helping Francis and Josie went. All he had done was get somebody else to worry about—Marius. He wondered, turning his coat-collar up over his muffler, what were Marius's activities that Harvey had mentioned, and thought: On top of the world Mr. Harvey Cantrell is, with his notion that his kind is the only kind that counts, and will jump on whoever comes close enough to try to pull him down. I would not want to have him against me in a fight. He thought again of Marius, and then remembered the promise he had made Emily Schaeffer on Fourth of July night more than two years ago. It had not been his fault that he had not been able to keep his promise, he told himself. Of all the bull-headed—well, he would try once again, he had to try once again. He looked back once at the windows of the Bank, and turned over the sidewalk and across the frozen slush of the Square to Marius's store, its windows already bright with Christmas decorations. He did not know what he was going to tell Marius, but he felt impelled to go by the menace that lurked, sharp and somehow terrifying, in Harvey's talk about what the Federal government was going to do. Marius's activities—what could they be? he wondered.

He went into the warmth of Marius's place, looking around curiously, suddenly aware that it was years since he had been in. He saw that the store was clean and bright-looking, that early as it was, people were moving up and down the narrow aisles among the well-filled counters. He reflected that Marius must be doing

well, and then seeing Albert coming towards him with a look of surprise on his face, realized that this husky and prosperous-looking shopkeeper must be in good part responsible for the well-kept appearance of the store. "No nonsense in him," he said wearily to himself as Albert came up and shook hands.

"Some nice silk dress goods, Mr. Cantrell?" Al said, grinning at him.

"Not today, Albert. . . . I just dropped in—that is, if your father is in . . ."

"Sure is," Al told him, pleased. "Same place—just follow the stairs up to the balcony."

The old man started for the stairs, but turned and came back. He said diffidently: "Albert, is your father still as strong for his ideas? I mean does he get around much to meetings and such?"

Al's face sobered. "More than ever," he said. "I wish—"

"Yes, Albert, I know what you wish. . . . But I thought maybe that after that knock on the head he got a couple of years ago—well, that he might have lost some of his enthusiasm."

Al shook his head.

The old man went on: "Listen, Albert, I want you to keep an eye out for your father."

Albert looked frightened. "Gee, what's up, Mr. Cantrell?" he exclaimed. "Has he got himself into trouble? What'll I do?" He looked less the smooth young business man and more like a worried boy. "Tell me . . ."

"I don't know what to tell you," the old man said. "There's something in the wind— He ought to watch his step. If he won't, promise me that you'll watch it for him, Albert."

"Gee! As bad as that?"

"As bad as nothing yet," John told him sharply. "I told you I don't know." He turned away. "I'll go up to your father," he said, and left Al staring after him.

"A child, after all," he murmured to himself as he climbed the stairs. "A child, a round-faced baby. . . ." He remembered suddenly that this baby's engagement had been announced in the

Chronicle night before last. On his way out, he would have to congratulate the boy.

Marius, too, was surprised to see him, but was composed by the time they had shaken hands. The old constraint still lay between them, and for a while they talked vague generalities. John, observing his old friend's face, saw that time had dragged a deep iron in it in the last ten years. Marius's moustache and brows were all silver now, his hair still thick, but silver too. The triangle from the corners of the nostrils to the sides of the mouth lay incongruously upon Marius's full loose cheeks. In his eyes deep beneath the shallow cheer of his greeting lay a look compounded of memory, obstinacy, and regret, as if to say: "It is your fault that we are strangers now."

To this look John addressed himself at last. "You're wondering why I've come?" he said. "Well, I may be a damn old fool. . . . Oh, not for coming, Marius!"

Marius's look did not change at all. Stubborn old mule, John thought, telling himself that he ought to get up and walk out, yet knowing that he would not until he had said what he had come to say. The promise he had made Emily was excuse enough for staying. But most of all he was staying for something plain and strong in him—a feeling of friendship for Marius that had never left him in all the twelve years of the break between them, a friendship whose loss had been like a piece cut out of his life. "Damn old fool," he repeated, "because I've really got nothing much to go on."

Marius looked at him with polite inquiry, but still said nothing.

John went ahead: "Something's in the wind, Marius. I've heard that Washington, that the Attorney General in Washington, is going soon to make trouble for"—he hesitated—"for agitators. Serious trouble. Arrests maybe so far as I know."

"And so you came to warn me?"

"Yes, if you're still—"

"I am. You know I am," Marius said. "My views have not changed."

"How would I know?"

"Do you think I'd quit?" Marius asked. "Just because. . ."

"It isn't 'just because'—it's serious, I told you. For Emily's sake, for Albert's, if not for your own, I should think you'd quit for a time whatever you're doing."

Marius pulled himself up straight in his chair. "No," he said. "What do you think I am anyway?"

"An old fool," John said promptly, "with so many fancy principles they've pushed common sense clear out of your head." He could feel the constraint between them dissolving. This was like old times, like the old cronies of long ago. He felt good.

"You, with your common sense," Marius muttered at him. "Same old babe in the woods."

"All right then! Go and get yourself shipped off to Atlanta or Leavenworth. Go on. Be a jailbird."

"Eugene Debs is still in jail."

"If you're lucky," John snapped, "maybe they'll put you in the same cell with him."

"You kept me out of jail once, didn't you?" Marius said. "Is it getting to be a habit?"

They laughed together.

"It's a wonder you didn't go and give yourself up on principle the next day," John said.

"The next day," Marius said, "I had a terrible headache. A policeman's club is very hard." He added seriously: "Those were bad days for me—the war days."

"Well, you'd better be careful," John told him, "that more bad days don't come to you. Being in jail, I mean."

"I don't have to worry about that," Marius said. "I've done—I'm doing nothing wrong. Whatever I've done is my right to do. At least, according to the Bill of Rights."

"In theory, yes," John said. He leaned forward and frowned. "But the trouble is—Godalmighty!" he burst out, "You're like a schoolboy, Marius! Worse than that fat boy of yours downstairs."

Don't you realize yet what a difference there is between the theory of a thing and the practice?"

"That's it," Marius said. "That's what I've been trying to make you see almost since the day I first knew you. Yes. Yes, that's what I've been fighting all my life—the difference between the theory this country is supposed to live by and the practice that denies the theory." His eyes had brightened. "That's just it, John."

"Yes, I know," John said, "and for thirty years off and on I listened to you, and for thirty years told you that the difference gets less little by little, year by year, and that's the best way and the way it must be."

Marius leaned back in his chair and laughed. "After all these years, and here we are. Starting all over again."

"You mean that, Marius?" John asked. "Starting all over again?"

Marius looked solemn. "John, I've been a damn fool," he said.

"In a minute I'm going to bust out crying," the old man told him.

"Me, too," Marius said.

They looked at each other, smiling.

Then John said briskly: "Well, what are you going to do about it?"

"About what? Oh, you mean what you told me? Just what you think, John. It's not going to make any difference to me. I'm too old to change my ways now."

"You better be careful," the old man said. "Look—can't you just sort of lay low for a while? Do you have to be blating all the time? Give your tongue a rest for a few weeks."

"Don't worry about me," Marius said. "I got more faith than you in the Bill of Rights." He grinned happily at John's goaded look.

"All right, joke about it, you stubborn old mule. When they cave your head in and haul you away, you'll laugh on the other side of your fat face."

They smiled at each other again. Beneath everything they said

ran their delight that they were talking in the old intimate way again.

"Tell you what," Marius said, "meet me downtown for dinner at the Indian Head, and we'll fight it out. Maybe George will be able to sneak us some beer. Like the old days."

"All right," John said. "But I may have to come down a ladder to get out. Josie thinks a man of seventy-odd should be rolled up in cotton-batting every night at six and tucked into his little crib for the night."

"Josie? How is she?" Marius asked.

John shook his head. "Not so good. You know why?" He nodded at Marius. "Because she's a muleheaded, fancy-principled lady. Like you." He got to his feet.

Marius laughed. "Tonight about six-thirty. . . . Don't forget," he said as they shook hands.

The old man was nearly at the front door of the store when he heard Al's voice behind him. "Mr. Cantrell, what'd he say?"

"The old fool said 'no,' " John answered. "You keep your eye on him, you hear me, Albert?"

Al stammered: "Yes, sir, you bet. You bet I will, Mr. Cantrell."

Outside the old man remembered that he had again forgotten to congratulate Albert on his engagement.

JOSIE's voice stopped him in the hall as he was nearly at the door. "Father, for Heaven's sake, where are you going?"

He turned and looked at her guiltily. "Trust you to catch me," he said, "but I'm going out."

She stared at him. "On a day like this?—why, it must be down to zero. And New Year's Day, too."

"I know," he said, "but it's Marius—I promised him I would. He's making a speech down at the Fletcher Block this afternoon."

"You don't have to go," she said. "After all, you've got yourself to consider. You're not a young man—doesn't he realize that?"

He drew the gray muffler about his neck while she talked. "Don't get fussed now, Josie," he told her mildly. "I've been

taking care of myself with fair success for a number of years now. You've got no call to begin worrying now. And I promised Marius," he repeated.

"Marius Schaeffer'll get himself into trouble with his speeches one of these fine days," she said sharply. "And you along with him."

Why does she take things so hard? he thought. "Godalmighty, Josie," he said, "will you quit worrying? There's no sense to it. A little cold air never killed anybody yet."

"Then promise me you'll come right home after the meeting. You've been keeping terribly late hours, you can't deny that. How do you and he find so much to talk about? I should think you'd talked yourselves out long ago."

He smiled sheepishly at her, the wrinkles deep about his eyes. "We got ten, twelve years to make up for, Josie. That's why."

Her thin face softened. "Yes, I know," she told him. "I'm glad you've made it up with him, Father. . . . But after all, do you have to say it all at once? Now promise me, you'll be home early."

"But suppose," he said protestingly, "suppose . . ."

"Never mind, you promise."

"Oh, all right," he said. "And will you quit fussing over me? You'd think I was getting feeble-minded, the way you talk." He had the door open, and an icy draft swept in against them. He waved to her, and she lifted her hand. Unhappy, poor unhappy girl, he thought, as he walked towards the taxicab. If only I could do something . . .

When he came into the musty-smelling hall, he saw that Marius was already seated on the platform. He sat down a few benches behind the crowd clustered up near the platform, thinking there was not much of a turnout, not more than thirty or forty. He caught Marius's eye, and Marius smiled down at him. Tickled pink he is, the old man thought, think's he's going to remake the whole city just by talking, the old buzzard. Been dreaming all his life, and not waked up yet. He wondered who the other two on the platform were, and then looked to see if there were others he

knew in the murmuring group. This was Union headquarters, Marius had told him, and he felt it was a little awkward for him to be at the meeting because the men worked for Harvey Cantrell, and he was associated with Harvey in the Bank, if not in the Iron Works. If only Harvey were not so stubborn, he reflected, there would be no need for these meetings, no cause for the buzzing menacing murmur in the crowd. And yet certainly Harvey knew his business; certainly, too, was entitled to his beliefs. And the only way was for Harvey and the men to argue it out. It was a free country and—he smiled a little to himself, thinking of his manuscript and quoting himself—it offered the “freedom of the field.” He saw Albert standing up near the platform, and said to himself: “Good boy. I still haven’t wished him well on his engagement.”

Every once in a while the doors at the back of the hall opened, and another man came in, walking self-consciously up to the group by the platform. About time they started, he reflected. They weren’t very businesslike. He began to feel a little impatient, and fidgeted on the scarred uncomfortable bench.

“Got the itch, Cousin John?”

He turned quickly, and saw it was Phil Cantrell who had spoken to him. He was delighted to see the boy. “Sit down, Phil, sit down,” he exclaimed. “It’s months since I’ve seen you,” thinking swiftly to himself that Phil was no longer a boy, but a man, with a man’s hard quick look. He moved over on the bench and Phil sat down beside him. “You’re here for the paper, huh?” he asked.

Phil nodded. “I suppose Father told you.”

“Uh-huh. When they going to begin this meeting, anyhow?”

“Oh, they always take their time,” Phil said. Smiling, he went on: “And I suppose you feel guilty because Father showed you my poem.”

The old man looked embarrassed. Then he laughed. “I guess I do. How . . . ?”

“Father told me he’d found one of my unpublished works and

showed it to you. But it's all right. I don't mind that you saw it."

"Well, now, I liked it, Phil."

Phil gave him a stiff little bow. "Now that's a compliment," he said, "from one writer to another. And how's your great work coming on?"

"Slow, Phil, awful slow. . . . But your piece was too gloomy, no young man should be writing such gloomy pieces. Leave it to us old fellers whose life is nearly over." At some stir on the platform he looked up quickly, his face brightening, but the men were still talking idly, and he murmured: "We'll be here all afternoon, I guess. . . . Yes, Phil, it was too gloomy to my taste, what I understood of it."

"It couldn't be otherwise for me," Phil said. He looked a little uneasy and self-conscious. "Trouble was I didn't quite know how to say it. But"—he lifted his voice a little—"I meant it. All of it." He waved his arm towards the group up at the front of the hall. "What do they know?—grubbing in the darkness they were born to. Cheating themselves with words, thinking they're going to get somewhere with their meetings. Not them, never. It's the tough ones, the hard ones, the ones with force and cunning that are on top. These are just fooling themselves."

"Phil, it could be your father talking!"

Phil shook his head. "No," he said, "he thinks he's shrewd, but he isn't. He's a laugh like the rest of them. Because he's grubbing like the rest. Sure, and for the same thing—money and more money."

"Well, Phil, after all, there's work to be done. The money's only part of it."

"Why fool yourself, Cousin John? Read the papers, and you'll see what fools they are. The whole life of this country is just a treadmill—people doing all this frantic busy living on the surface of life, pretending they've got civilization when all they've got is machinery—it's just a big laugh, that's all it is. A big laugh," he repeated. "An intelligent man can't do anything but sit on the sidelines and laugh."

"Is that what you're doing, Phil?"

"Sure," Phil said, "of course. Why do you think I took this silly two-for-a-cent job? Because it gives me a ringside seat, that's why."

"Your poem didn't sound like laughing to me," the old man said in bewilderment. "Not only was it gloomy, it was sad."

"Sure, it was," Phil said. "That was how I felt when I wrote it. It was meant to say that the spirit's gone out of the country, what with its wild rush to get the material things of life."

"Bread and butter, you mean," the old man said.

"Yes, their bellies are all they care about, stuffing their bellies," Phil said. "What do they care about culture?—about the struggle of the free and lonely spirit to express itself?"

"Well, what's to stop this 'lonely spirit'?" The old man was puzzled by Phil's talk; it didn't make much sense to him, and he felt disappointed in Phil, and irritated by him, too.

"The crassness, the materialism of American life, that's what stops it," Phil said. "The fact that a sincere artist can't find a decent audience in America. Why, a poet, for instance, is something to laugh at, to make fun of—you know that's the way the average American feels about poetry. He thinks a painter is a dreamy fool in a big black bow-tie starving happily to death in a garret. That's what America thinks of art, of real culture. That's why it's so restless, trying this game and that game—and most of all the money-game—to keep itself busy. Like a cageful of monkeys. Funny monkeys. That's where the laugh comes. For the intelligent man, I mean."

"For you?"

"All right," Phil said. "For me. . . . I tell you, the soul of this country is dead."

"Is that so?" John muttered. "You don't know much about this country then."

He was angry through and through. This whippersnapper with his sneering pretty phrases, his talk about sitting back and laughing at the country rasped his nerves. He twisted on the bench to

face Phil, but as he did so, a voice came down from the platform at the end of the room, and he turned back to listen. "It's begun at last," he said to himself. He looked sidewise at Phil, and saw that he had a pencil out and some folded sheets of copy paper. "Be sure and take it all down," he said, "it ought to give you a good laugh." Then he turned his attention back to the platform where Marius was coming forward to speak.

Marius cleared his throat. "Fellow-workers," he said, "many of you have heard me speak before and know what I have to say. It is true that I do not work with my hands, but that I have worked always for the workers of this city you all know. We are here to plan a workingmen's association by which the laborers of this city, particularly the ones that work in the Iron Works, can get justice. Justice," he repeated heavily. He looked at a slip of paper in his hand. "Since September 22, 300,000 steel workers in this country have been out on strike for justice. You are not among them. You are not among them because your employer, Mr. Harvey Cantrell, has always been too strong, too clever for you. And because you have been afraid—afraid that there would not be bread for your wives and children. That is right, isn't it?"

He stopped and looked at them, and John, watching eagerly, saw the heads and shoulders of the men lift and stir, and heard the low deep murmur of their agreement.

"You have tried before to have a union, and you have failed. That we all know. But that is no reason"—Marius's voice lifted with a strong ring—"that is no reason you should not try again. It is your right, as it has always been from the beginning of this country, to band together and fight against your oppressors. It says so in the greatest piece ever written in this country, in the Declaration of Independence. Listen to what it says." He read slowly from the paper in his hand: "But when a long train of abuses and usurpations pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such despotism. . . ." "You hear that?" Marius said. "It is their right, it is their duty."

Not fair, not fair, John Cantrell thought. Where's the despotism? He's not proved any despotism. He's still running away with himself. He turned to Phil who was making aimless scratches on his copy paper. "You're not laughing yet," he said.

". . . have come together," Marius was saying, "to know one another, to understand one another and at last to band yourselves together to make right and justice for yourselves." He looked at the slip in his hand: "I have here a list of the officers picked by the Nominating Committee which met at my house last week. These men will speak to you. Mr. Nick Belitski will be the first one."

Beside Al Schaeffer a lank broad-shouldered man rose slowly and stumbled out into the aisle. He went up onto the platform, stumbling again as he took the last step. Clumsy lump! Al thought. He looked quickly around at the other faces, and suddenly saw Louie Davis, with a look of straining attention on his face. What's he got to do with this? Al wondered. He's no millhand.

"I don't talk no good," Nick Belitski said. "No. But I'm good ironworker in clean-up gang in pit. Is heavy hot work, but not enough money. More money, I don't care how hot, how heavy. I'm strong man. I'm work fourteen hours on night trick, ten hours on day trick, wit' long trick of twenty-four hours every two weeks. Is too much, so I'm say, let's make union." He stopped abruptly, looked around at Marius with a sheepish grin, and then came off the platform while the others clapped soberly.

Marius stepped forward again. "The next speaker is Barney Hanagan."

Al stared at the thick-chested Irishman, who stooped forward a little as he walked up onto the platform. He made an awkward nod to Marius and facing the crowd said: "Well, me, I agree with Nick there. A man don't mind the hardship of the work if he gets enough money for it. If it's a free country like Mr. Schaeffer says, then we got our rights. We c'n make an organization, and get what we want by fightin' for it. I tell you, we cert'nly can't get it by just jabberin'. It's like I said: I don't mind the work no more'n

Nick does if only we was gettin' a dacint day's pay out of it. Well, somebody's got to do the dirty work. Me, I don't mind what the work is. But say, we gotta give our kids a chance. It's the skimpy pay that gets a man discouraged. You know it. I know it. We gotta organize, is the answer." He looked around. "That's about all I gotta say," he said directly to Marius. At Marius's nod, he moved off the platform.

When John Cantrell looked at Marius gravely moving to the edge of the platform again, he realized what Marius was doing at last. Marius was through talking. He was finally putting his creed into action, putting it to the test of the deed. He had done the same thing himself, he reflected, sunk in his thought and now not listening to Marius or to the next speaker—yes, he had done the same thing twelve years ago when he had gone to work with Harvey. And it was because Marius was trying his creed that he had been willing to make up their quarrel. Because he was acting for his principles he no longer felt unequal. The feeling of hidden menace he had had when he had warned Marius a month ago came strongly upon him: you were safe, he told himself, only as long as you believed but did not act: when you dared the deed, then the danger struck. But you couldn't separate one from the other, separate the thought from the act, the creed from the deed. By itself each was nothing, a fragment, but together they made life, made its direction and meaning. Its danger, too. And often its death.

Phil was nudging him. "That poem," he was saying, "I wrote it before I went to war."

"Was it the war, then, that taught you to laugh at your country and its people?" the old man asked.

"Yes," Phil told him wryly, "when I went to put the shoe on the other foot, I found my leg was gone." He made aimless circles on the paper in his lap. "The joke was on me. I'm still laughing."

"You're talking riddles, Phil," the old man said.

"This one hasn't got any answer," Phil said.

"No? You listen to what he's saying"—he nodded towards Ma-

rius—"that's part of the answer. Listen to what he says. There's more in it than just talk."

"Now listen to me, men," Springer, the Federal marshal, was saying, "I'm not here to make a speech to you. I'm here to get action."

Eddie Mundy, pale but calm, looked at the faces of the men he had summoned together for the marshal. Tough enough for anybody, he thought, and better, much better, than having the police who might be soft.

About fifty men were crowded together into the main office, and the air was blue with cigarette smoke. Outside the pale light of the winter afternoon hung unchanging.

This was his big chance, Eddie told himself. This was what he had been working towards. This was his chance to show Francis Connell and Harvey Cantrell, too, that he had the brains and the push to get things done. It had not been so easy; he had had to work quickly but carefully, to get the right men together. His eyes, restlessly moving over the faces of the men, settled on Amby Tait, fidgeting by the window. Nervous as a cat, he thought, but he's done his share all right. In the back of the room he saw the nigger fighter, who was still saving up to buy an island, and his manager whispering to each other.

"Now, you understand, men," Springer was saying, "you've all been sworn in as deputies of the Federal gover'ment. That means you're all officers of the law, working for the Attorney General in Washington, and you've got to take and obey orders like you would in the army. I understand from Mr. Mundy here that some of you are vet'rans—all the better. You know how to obey orders and you got the right patriotic spirit. Now, the cars are outside waiting, and in a few minutes we'll be starting down to break this meeting up, and take whoever's there into custody—U. S. gover'ment custody. Now, I don't figure there'll be any resistance, and I don't want anybody here to start anything, fighting or anything like that, but if anyone doesn't want to come along peaceable, then you got the right to use force. I tell you one thing:

the U. S. gover'ment wants every man at that meeting for investigation. If any trouble starts, I don't want a single man to get away. The gover'ment don't do things by halves. See?" He put his hand up to his moustache and gently smoothed it. "Now, Mr. Mundy"—he turned towards Eddie—"if you're ready. Please."

Eddie got up from his desk and tugged at the large cardboard packing-case against the wall. He drew it forward into the middle of the room while the men watched curiously. Then Springer and he pulled the top up and began to pull out the clubs. The men murmured and fell back a little.

Springer, clumsily holding clubs in both hands, said: "Now, men, give me your attention again. Like I was telling you, this might not be a tea party. I don't want anybody to use a club unless he has to, but like I told you, if any man resists you, you got a right to use force. It's your duty. Particularly, I don't want any papers, pamphlets, documents at this hall destroyed by anybody there. They're going to be the property of the U. S. gover'ment. . . . All right, Mr. Mundy."

He and Eddie began passing the clubs out to the men, and the men took them slowly, running their hands along the smooth wood.

"Jesus!" one of them said.

Springer went on talking. "The cars'll wait outside. Get the prisoners out quickly and quietly. When we get them down to the County Courthouse, your work is done. You're being well paid for these few hours, and I want you to keep that in mind and give the U. S. gover'ment its money's worth."

Someone in the crowd said: "Ah, cut the gab, and let's get goin'."

"You'll be peein' in your pants in a minute," another voice said.

Springer drew himself up and stared around at them a moment. Then he said: "All right now, you got your orders. Any questions? . . . Let's go!"

Going down the stairs of the building, Eddie was wondering where Francis Connell was. I do the work, he thought, and he

collects. But one of these days I'll be up there with him. He felt a deep uneasiness in the pit of his belly. It'll be over soon, he reassured himself. An hour at the most. The men clattered behind him on the stairs. Connell had asked him to drop in at the house later and let him know what happened. "I don't want to show in this, Eddie," he had said. "I'm leaving it up to you—I can promise you it won't be to your disadvantage if you do a good job." A good job—that was what he wanted, that was what he had been aiming at from the beginning. A good job, meaning a job with plenty of money, he thought. Nothing else. And now he was on to it. He had a sudden memory of a day long ago when a gang of kids had tried to rob him of two dollars. He had fought through them, but it had been a fight all the way ever since for him, for his father and mother. His father had lost his job when Prohibition had shut down the Brewery, and had not got another since. He was only forty-seven, but people said he was too old. It was time Connell got him a city job. And his mother was entitled to a rest after all these years in Schaeffer's. But now she was talking about sending the girls to college. Money was needed—plenty of money. All right. Pretty soon, they'd all be on Easy Street. Sure, Easy Street. He set his jaw tight as they came out into the pale light and his nostrils took the sharp pinch of the winter air. "Happy New Year," he said to himself. "A Happy New Year to you, Eddie Mundy." He went towards the first of the cars drawn up at the curb.

As the car they were in pulled away, Indie tapped Amby Tait on the shoulder. "Jes's, Amby, what you got us into, boy?"

"Whaddya mean?" Amby said. His light look slipped past Indie.

"Look at this." Indie pointed to the club in his hand.

"Ah, it's just for show. You won't have to use it. For a guy so handy with his dukes, you're awful nervous. You better talk to him, Jack," he said to Smitty, huddled up next to him on the seat.

"Sure, sure," Jack said. "It's the easiest money we ever made, Frankie boy."

"You didn't tell me we had to get it with clubs."

"What're you beefin' about, Frank? If I didn't know you was so crazy about the dough, I'd never of mentioned it to you after Amby here propositioned me. Besides, you was in the army, wasn't you? You're doin' somethin' for your country."

"I don't want to do it," Indie said. "Suppose somebody gets hurt?"

Amby laughed. "You're a fine one to be worryin' about somebody gettin' hurt." The car turned into Congress Square and headed north up Hamblin Street. "Couple minutes now," he said. He sat with his hands spread out on his knees, his fingers tapping away rapidly. When he turned towards Indie, Indie shrank away a little from the quick, never-resting glance of the shining pale eyes.

Crazy as a coot, Indie thought, and nobody guesses it but me. He was going to leave them when they came to the hall. He'd just get out and walk away. In a low voice he said so to Smitty who muttered: "F' Christ sake, are you crazy or what? You're workin' for the gover'ment now. You wanna get yourself in the pen? If you wanna be smart, lay back, that's all. That's what I'm gonna do when I get in. Let the guys up front do the battlin'. All we gotta do is c'llect. What kind of a sucker do you think I am anyway?"

Amby was listening to them.

Indie pulled back and said for Amby's ears: "Okay. You're the boss, the great manager," but he knew he was not going into the hall.

When the cars stopped, the men got out slowly and stood irresolutely in little clusters on the sidewalk.

"C'mon, what're you waiting for?" Springer said. "Follow me and Mr. Mundy here, and follow our play. That's all. And quietly too. Show your clubs as soon as we get inside. That'll show 'em we mean business."

The old wooden stairs creaked under their weight, and some of them winced at the noise as they moved up to the assembly room, Eddie and Springer in the lead, the rest massed close behind

them and pushing closer and closer together, each man taking reassurance from the touch of the other as they came to the narrow double doors facing the broad landing.

When the doors opened, John Cantrell looked around, and said to Phil: "Here's a lot more—you'd think they'd get here on time."

Phil grabbed his arm. "Look!—they've got clubs. There's going to be trouble." He half rose from the bench.

All the men at the front of the hall were twisting around to stare at the newcomers, and Marius stepped to the edge of the platform and called: "Who are you? What do you want? This is a private meeting."

The deputies came slowly down the middle aisle, and Springer said in a loud flat voice: "I'm a Federal marshal. From the Attorney General's office. I hold an open warrant for everyone at this meeting. You're all under arrest, and I advise you to come along quietly." He and his men had reached the row where John and Phil were sitting, and he jerked a thumb at them in signal that they were to be picked up. Three or four men detached themselves from the group and began to work their way through the empty benches towards the Cantrells. Springer and the others kept moving towards the front of the hall, and the men clustered under Marius got slowly to their feet and massed with their backs to the platform where Marius still stood, watching the advance incredulously.

Eddie Mundy seized Springer's arm and whispered rapidly to him, nodding back meanwhile at John and Phil. Then he came quickly down the aisle to them motioning the four deputies aside, and saying as he approached: "It's all right, Mr. Cantrell, you can go." He looked inquiringly at Phil.

"Press," said Phil. "I'm from the *Chronicle*."

"What's going on here, Mundy?" the old man exclaimed. "What's the meaning of these men with clubs? Is that loud-mouthed man what he says, or are you all crazy?"

"No—didn't Mr. Connell tell you?" Eddie Mundy said. "We're deputies for Mr. Springer there. He's a Federal marshal, all right."

"But look, you can't—" The old man stopped as Springer, halting within ten feet of the men against the platform and looking around quickly to make sure that the deputies were backing him, said: "I want you men to come forward one at a time."

No one moved.

Marius, his face colorless, leaned forward from the platform. "Who are you? What do you want?" he asked, a look of disbelief and pain in his eyes.

"I told you once," Springer said. "If you're the leader of these men, come down from that platform and tell them to come along quietly." He lifted the club in his hand. "Unless you want trouble."

"You've got no right to break up this meeting," Marius said. His voice shook. "This is a free assembly. The Bill of Rights—"

Springer said: "Will you come down, or do you want us to pull you down?"

Hanagan took a step forward. "What you gonna do with us?"

"Buy you ice cream, you dumb Mick!" one of the deputies said.

Springer turned. "All right, men," he said, "that's enough talk. Take them."

Back in the hall, his hand trembling, John Cantrell said to Phil: "There's going to be trouble. I—" He started up from his seat, but Phil seized his arm.

"Don't be foolish, Cousin John," he said. "You'll get your head split open. Look!"

At Springer's command the men had moved forward, and two of them had seized Hanagan who looked from one to the other in sullen wonder, then jerked an arm loose, and swung his fist savagely into the face of the deputy who held his left arm. Blood spurted from the man's nose. He lifted his club, and with his companion leaped upon Hanagan and bore him back against the platform. At once the two groups rushed murderously together.

Springer, carried forward by the rush of his men, put his hands on the edge of the platform, vaulted up, and moved upon Marius whose distended eyes were fixed upon the cursing, struggling men beneath him.

He did not hear Al, who was battling vainly to get through to the platform, shout to him: "Pa! Look out, Pa!" while he goggled in terror at the club half-raised in Springer's hand.

"You Goddamn old fool!" Springer said. "Tell your men to stop."

"It is their right. It is—" Marius stammered, turning towards him, and then, his face contorted, snatched the club from Springer's hand, and jumped down into the thick of the tangled mass of men. Hanagan's face, the lips mashed and bloody, fell past him. In rage and anguish Marius dropped the club and began to drive his fists at whatever strange face came to him from the crowd. He went down once from a glancing blow on the cheekbone, and lay stunned for a minute under the crush of the bodies locked above him and the feet trampling across his back. Then he pulled himself up again with the taste of blood in his gaping mouth and beat and beat again at the wild distorted faces until his fists were numb.

From the instant Marius jumped, Al had flailed away wildly to get to him, and finally, with fear for his father nearly choking him, had lowered his head and butted blindly at the mass in front of him until he looked up straining to see his father's silver head, and did not see it. He cried out: "Pa!" and at the same moment got a crushing blow at the side of his head that drove him, half-unconscious, from his feet. He sank down on his knees and swayed dizzily. When he arose again, one hand to his bruised temple, the struggle was nearly over. A few men still tugged and jerked to break away from their captors, but most of them had been herded back against the platform and were standing there sullenly, taking long panting breaths, four or five of them groaning.

Two men were bending over a body on the floor, and as Al looked towards them, he felt his arm gently taken from behind. He looked quickly around, and John Cantrell said to him: "It's your father, Albert."

"Where? where?" he stammered, with returning recollection. "Where is he? What'd they do to him?"

"He's there on the floor," the old man said in a shaken voice,

and Al, the men having shifted position, saw now the bloodied silver head lolling back on the dirty floor.

"Pa!" he said in a low voice, running forward, and dropped to his knees beside the dead man and took up his father's hands and held them clenched against his breast. "Pa!" he screamed suddenly, and the others fell back uneasily at the terrible hoarse cry. He looked around at them, and exclaimed wildly: "Sons of bitches! Murderers!" He choked. "Who did it to him? He had a right to say . . . he was a good man . . . the bastards that killed him! I—I—" He threw his head up and said: "The gover'ment, the stinking gover'ment! . . ." then bent again over his father's face, staring down into the wide-open blank eyes.

When John Cantrell came forward and laid his hand on his shoulder, Albert stared dazedly up at him and then leaped to his feet. "You knew about this," he said. "You told me. . . . It's your fault! Why didn't you stop him? . . . them? It's your fault! Yours!"

"Mine?" murmured the old man after a long moment. "Maybe it was, Albert." He looked down at his dead friend, feeling an agonizing chill take his heart. "Maybe it was," he repeated. "I don't know."

"I'm sorry about this," Springer said in a loud voice, "but we got our duty. Come on, you men."

Slowly they began moving towards the doors, captors and captives, circling wide around Al, who stared at them with unseeing eyes, holding his father's stiffening fingers in his hand.

John Cantrell went quickly up to Eddie Mundy and said to him: "Tell me, did Francis Connell know about this?"

"Well," Eddie said, "he didn't know it was going to be like this."

"But he knew?"

Eddie nodded.

The old man turned aside. Behind him the sullen crowd shuffled slowly across the floor towards the doors.

Louie Davis was trying to piece out what had happened while

he moved mechanically along with the others. First a speech from old man Schaeffer and then from Nick Belitski and Barney Hagan and Frank Mendes. . . . Then the crowd had all turned around, he with them, to see the others slowly coming up the aisle, their clubs dangling from their hands. In the melee he had not fought, had merely stood in wooden wonder until a club beating across his shoulder had sent him staggering back and out of the massed crowd against the wall, from where he had watched with dilated eyes the rising and the falling of the clubs, sometimes obscurely moved with a wish to run and hide, yet rooted to his place in surprise and terror. Now as he went draggingly down the aisle, the thought of Irene shocked him out of his stupor. Fear shook him—the fear of jail, the fear of losing his job, the fear of losing Irene—and he made a sudden, powerful wrench away from his captors, and plunged through the open doors.

Springer yelled: "Get him! You!" and pushed at the two deputies nearest him. At once they broke into swift flight after Louie whose clattering steps on the bottom flight still echoed up the dim stairwell.

He ran straight up the north side of Hamblin Street, his shoulders aching where the club had struck him. When he looked back and saw uncertainly in the deepening light his two pursuers, he put on a frantic burst of speed and rounded the corner into Trumbull Street. His breath began to come short and shallow. His head jerked from side to side as he ran searching for a hiding place—a dark doorway, a secret alley, a hole in the ground no matter how black and dirty—aware that the few people he passed had all stopped and were looking wonderingly up the street after him. The ache in his shoulders seemed to be striking into his lungs, and a sharp edge of pain cut into every breath he drew. His legs faltered occasionally, his stride broke, and he heard as if from a distance the rapid irregular beat of his feet as he turned into Trevor Street. Then he saw, he remembered, that he was close to Dave Bandler's house, and he swerved diagonally across the road, plunged up the walk and up the stairs and through the door on which the sign said

RING. WALK IN. and leaned back, his breath sobbing out of him.

"Dave!" he gasped.

The office door on his right opened, the hall light went on, and Dave Bandler came out quickly. "For God's sake, Louie, what's the matter?" he exclaimed.

"Hide me, Dave!" Louie panted. "They're chasing me. Maybe they saw me—saw me run in here." His breath came hot and hard.

"Tell me—" Dave said.

"We were having a meeting to start a union. I didn't know what—in the middle, the gover'ment men came. With clubs." He gasped between each phrase, leaning limply back against the door, his head turned fearfully toward the street, listening. "There was a fight, and I ran away. They chased me. Two of them." He whirled. "They're coming!"

Dave heard the clatter upon the stairs outside. As the bell rang a long peal, he pushed Louie towards the office door. "Go in there and through to the examination room in the back. Quick!" He pushed Louie into the office and drew the door to. Then he turned as the outside door flew open, and two men came into the hall.

"Where is he?" the first one said. "They said he ran in here."

The other one stood back a little, and Dave, with quick relief, saw that it was Amby Tait.

"What's it all about, Amby?" he asked.

Amby, breathing hard, shook his head and pointed to his laboring chest.

"Quit stallin'," the other panted. "This is a gover'ment job, see? We want the guy who came in here."

"I don't know what you're talking about," Dave said.

"Oh, a wise guy, huh?" the man said.

Amby said between breaths: "Listen, Dave—we saw the guy—run in here. . . . Don't make trouble—for yourself—tell us—where he is."

"You've got a bad chest there, Amby," Dave said. He thought

rapidly: If I could only get him alone, I could tell him it's Louie. "Come on in the office," he told them, and without waiting for their assent, led the way.

Dave sat down at his desk, pretending calmness, though his palms were sweating. For the first time he noticed the club in Amby's hand.

"What happened?" he asked, putting on a look of bright impersonal interest, still wondering how he could let Amby know it was Louie, "what's it all about?" hearing nothing in the examination room behind him, hoping that Louie had gone out the window.

"Can'tcha tell a stall when you see one?" the other man snarled at Amby, whose pale darting glance went past Dave at the door behind him. "Let's go through the place—we'll find the bastard."

Dave stood up. "Just a minute," he said. He pulled open the drawer in front of him and drew out his army pistol. He did not point it at them, but held it loosely in his hand. "Who the hell do you think you are?" he asked thickly. "You can't come busting into my house like a couple of crazy men, and think you can do what you like. If you got any authority, you go get a search warrant or something. Otherwise"—he lifted the gun a little—"you can get the hell out." This was what he should have said right away, he told himself.

"Now, Dave, you're just makin' trouble for yourself," Amby said. "This is a gover'ment job like we said. We know the guy's here."

"Must be one of his pals, the dirty Bullshevik," his companion said. "You want us to take that gun away from you?"

"Try it," Dave said. He took a step back.

"Oh, a wise Yid!" the other said.

"Get out," Dave told him. "You, too, Amby, before you're sorry."

"We're only doin' our duty, Dave," Amby said. "It's not us, it's the gover'ment."

The door behind Dave opened, and Louie Davis, pale and sweating, came into the room.

"There he is!" Amby's partner said. "I knew all the time the bastard was here."

Amby said in a light shaken voice: "Louie!"

"Dirty traitor!" Louie said. He moved towards Amby, who shrank back and away from him.

The other man cackled. "'At's a hot one. You're workin' for the gover'ment, and he calls you a traitor."

"But Amby knows what he means, don't you, Amby?" Dave said. "You know what Louie means—huh, Amby?"

"I know," Amby said, and then without a sound, without a movement, took Louie's open-handed blow across his face.

"Why, you punk—!" the other man said. He lifted the club in his hand, and said to Amby: "C'mon, let's give him the lumps."

"You forgot something," Dave said harshly. He pointed the gun up.

"Screw you and your gun!" the other said. "We got a right to take this bastard." He wheeled on Amby. "For Chris' sake, what're y'standin' there for? Let's grab him, an' blow. Outside, we—"

"Yeah," Amby said mechanically. "Sure." But he did not move.

"He's made a monkey outa you," the man said. His lips pulled away from his teeth. "But not me, see?" He put his hand on Louie's arm. "Stay here," he said to Amby. "Have y'self a good cry because the bad man slapped you. Maybe the Jew quack there will give y'some medicine." He jerked at Louie's arm. "C'mon, you!"

"Wait," Amby said. Dazedly he looked at Dave.

"You takin' him in with me, or not?" the other said. He shoved Louie towards the door.

"I can't," Amby said. "He—"

"No," Dave said quickly. "Because it's his brother."

The man turned to Amby. "Is 'at a fact? So that's why—"

"Yeah," Amby said.

The other pursed his lips, and let out a soft shrill whistle. "'At's a hot one, all right," he said.

"C'mon, let's blow," Amby said in a low voice. He walked carefully around Louie and stood by the door.

"If it's your brother—" the other said, and shrugged. "Okay. Okay by me." He followed Amby out.

"SURE you're all right?" Phil asked as he stopped the car in front of John Cantrell's house. He was anxious to get away and down to the courthouse to see the prisoners booked—he had a great story for the paper.

"I'm all right, Phil," the old man said slowly. "Thanks for the ride."

"Okay," Phil said. He put his foot to the starter.

The old man turned. "You haven't laughed yet?"

Phil stared at him. "No, I haven't. Not yet." He drove away.

John Cantrell stood on the sidewalk a moment looking after the car, and then went heavily up the steps. When he came into the living room, he saw Francis sitting in front of the fire, half asleep over a book. Josie was lying on the sofa with a comforter thrown over her legs.

She sat up when he came in, and said: "How is it you're so early? I thought—" then saw his gray face and his slow step, and came swiftly towards him. "What's the matter, Father? What's happened?"

"Marius"—his voice faltered—"Marius Schaeffer's dead," he told her. He heard Francis jump from his chair and come towards them, but he did not look at him.

"Dead?" Francis echoed in a voice still thick with drowsiness. "Schaeffer?"

John felt his daughter's fingers grip his arm. He said again dully: "Marius is dead."

"In God's name, Father!" Francis exclaimed. "What happened?"

The old man went slowly to the sofa and sat down. He felt sick, all tired out. His eyes fixed on the pattern of the rug at his

feet, in a clear but almost breathless voice he told them about the meeting and the fight, and steadily described Albert bending over Marius's bloody silver head on the dirty floor. But a terrible grief invaded him as he talked, and a wild protest of the heart against what he did not know, against whom he could not say. He knew only that he and Marius had picked up again and reknotted the threads that had bound them together for so many years, and that in an instant an angry club had ripped them through, so that he was now nearly breathless with his grief, as if with Marius some of his own breath, some of his own strength and spirit, lay dirtied and dead upon the floor.

When he had finished talking, Francis was by the fireplace fumbling with his book, but Josie still sat by him. He was quiet for a minute, and then he said: "I ought to go down to Emily Schaeffer—you know, I promised her—I promised I'd try to take care of him. I ought to go, but I—I feel very tired, Josie." His hand smoothed his empty sleeve.

"You can't go now, Father," Josie said. "Let me take you upstairs. You'll want to lie down and rest."

"Yes," he said, rising slowly, "I'll have a little rest, and then I'll go down." After a moment he murmured to her: "The boy, his son Albert, said it was my fault. Do you—?"

"How could he say that!" she exclaimed. "He didn't know what he was saying. Father, you mustn't. . . . How could you have done anything?" Oh, he's old, he's old! she thought. Now he's an old man.

"I don't know," he said. They were at the door. He drew away from her. "I'll go up alone, Josie."

"Now, Father, please."

But with petulance he drew away. "I'm all right, I tell you."

She watched his slow climb, his thin hand sliding on the banister, until he had turned the landing, and waited until she heard the closing of his door. Then she turned and went quickly back into the living room to confront Francis at the fireplace. He looked at her quickly and put his book down on the mantel.

"It's a terrible thing, Josie," he said timidly. "Your poor father'll take it hard."

"You won't, though, will you?" she said with harsh directness. "It'll never trouble your sleep that a good man died because of you."

He took a step towards her. "What are you talking about, Josie? You'll be saying next that I was the one that clubbed him!"

"I do! Your hand was on that club, Francis. And that man's blood is on your hands. You knew this was going to happen, didn't you? Didn't you?"

Before her steely insistence, awed by the harshness of her voice, her stern brooding look, he could only mutter: "As Christ is my witness, Josie, I had no notion it would come to a killing. I swear it."

"But you knew it might come to violence, didn't you? Ah, you did. Don't deny it to me. . . . You could've prevented it—or you could have been out of it. If you had, there wouldn't be this terrible guilt upon you."

"So," he burst out at her, "we're at the same story again, are we? I could've been out of it! How could I be out of it? It's part of my work, my world—can't you understand that? I'm no reader of the stars. I can't tell what's going to happen in advance. I do my work as best as I can. I do my duty to myself and those I'm bound to. If the government under the laws of this country sees fit to arrest a man, then I'm bound to uphold the country. If it comes to force, to violence, to death even, then it's a bad thing, but I'm still on the right side, the side of the right." He took a hesitant step towards her. "Josie, Josie!" he said. "What's come to us? You're killing me—I swear it—with your reproach of me. I love you, I've always loved you. I'll not stop now. Can't you for the love and the life of us together and the child, can't you put these things in the balance and see what they're worth compared to these reproaches and accusations as if I was a dirty criminal?" He looked in vain for some softening in her, but it was as if she had not heard him.

"Yes, you've said all this before," she replied. "I believe you love me. I love you, Francis."

"Ah, Josie—!" he broke out, but she said: "No. . . . I know the world's a dirty place, Francis, know it as well as you. But you don't have to let it tell you what to believe. You've got yourself, your own spirit to put against it. You're the judge of the world, not the world of you. It's you must choose, not the world for you."

"And that's the way it's been with me!" he said desperately.

"How can you say that?" she burst out. "You that's responsible for the death of a good man, a kind man. You could have prevented it, you knew what was going to happen. You could have told him, the others to stay away. . . ."

"Josie, in God's name, will you stop saying that? You'd have me betraying the country, playing a two-faced game."

"Haven't you always?" she asked him. "You've played for Harvey Cantrell and his gang on one side, and the people of this city on the other."

"No!" he said violently. "You can't—"

"And now that it's come to blood on your hands, you still won't give it up?"

"No!" he exclaimed. "No! There's nothing on my conscience. You can call me 'murderer' in the streets, but you won't shake me. If I was to give in to you now, wouldn't I be admitting that all these years I've been a hypocrite, a thief, a murderer? Wouldn't I? How can you say you love me, and yet put that thought upon me?" He leaned to her. "No, Josie. It's my life. I live it in the way I think best. Not you, nor anyone else can tell me the right and wrong of it. . . . Josie!" He held out his hands to her. "Please, Josie. . . ."

But she stepped back and away. "You're a confessed murderer already," she said.

The violence of her words appalled him as if she had suddenly plucked a sword from the air and was holding the point against his breast.

"Murderer!" she repeated suddenly, and he felt the steel point enter and twist in his breast. And while he stood pale, before he could utter her name again, she went from the room.

JOHN CANTRELL lay on his back on his bed and stared blankly at the ceiling. "Your fault"—the words turned and twisted in his mind—"your fault." No, it was not, he groaned to himself, it was not his fault. But the words of accusation ran on under his denial, and he thought at last: Yes, my fault, yes. Why should he hide the truth from himself any longer? Had he not hidden it long enough? He could have asked Harvey, he could have asked Francis any time in the past month maybe and they would have told him—they must have known—of the raid on the hall. And then he could have really warned Marius, could have warned all the bruised and the wounded. But he had deceived himself, he reflected, fearful lest this very deed should occur. He had been standing on the sidelines, pretending that he was in the battle, stepping forward onto the field when it was safe to go forward, stepping back when the whirl of the conflict drew close. Yet he had not wanted to choose sides. He had not wanted to feel that there were sides to be chosen, with Harvey leading one, and Marius, the other. He had thought he could belong to both. And it was a good thought, he reflected bitterly, but after all it was just dreaming.

"Dreaming," he said to himself. Because if there had to be sides, a man had to choose. Not pretend to choose. Not pretend there was no battle. Not pretend to be above the battle. This was something he had known long ago, known when he enlisted and went to lose an arm at Antietam. To make a creed, there must follow a deed. If he had chosen long ago to run with Harvey, then he should have taken Harvey's creed. And with Marius, then Marius's. And he had done neither. No, he had tried to be on both sides, yet fight for neither. He closed his eyes, and stared into the flashing blackness of his lids.

He heard Josie's light tap on the door, and then her voice: "Father? Are you all right?"

"I'm all right," he said. The strain in her voice struck him to the heart, and he thought: She and Francis have been at it, too. "Don't worry about me, Josie."

"No, Father," she said.

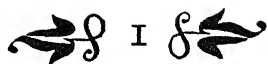
And if the life of the deed destroyed the dream of the creed, he reflected as her steps receded, whose fault was it? He could not have guessed that the deed would kill Marius. He himself could not have guessed that it would take his arm at Antietam. And if he could have guessed, would he not have faced up to the test of the creed just the same? So it was not his fault, after all, that Marius was dead. Marius himself had chosen to die for his creed since he had chosen to fight for it.

The old man stirred restlessly on the bed, then got up and went to his desk. He picked up his pen and wrote rapidly: "Dear Harvey, I hereby present to you and the Board of Directors my resignation as president of the Farmers & Mechanics Bank as of this date, January 1, 1920. Sincerely yours, John Cantrell." Harvey would not understand perhaps. But, at any rate, there it was—his withdrawal from the battle. If he could not bring himself to fight on either side, he would not fight at all. "When you get old, you get tired," he said to himself, "and you can't fight even if you want to." He closed his eyes, but suddenly saw so clearly a vision of Marius's bloody silver head on the dirty floor, that his heart gave a terrible leap. He opened his eyes, crying out: "Marius!" and felt the hot tears starting down his cheeks.

SOMETHING OF A HERO

BOOK THREE





IT WAS time. His fingers turned the dial, and the radio said: "Brrrk . . . brrk . . . July 4, 1929, bringing you news gathered by the staff of the *Persepolis Chronicle* and the *Associated Press*. The Fourth of July celebration in this city got off to an early start with the general display of flags at 5:30 this morning. At 6:30 the bells of the city were rung for half an hour. At an early hour roads were jammed with motorists on their way to amusement parks and lake resorts, while hundreds of visitors from outlying towns and districts have come into the city to see the parade and exercises in celebration of the one hundred and fifty-third anniversary of the founding of the country.

"At 11:00 a description of the parade and the exercises will be broadcast by the *Chronicle* from the reviewing stand in front of the City Hall. Several companies of the National Guard, including two of artillery, together with members of the American Legion, fraternal organizations, and the floats of various businesses will comprise the procession. Three bands will furnish music. In addition to the description of the exercises by our staff reporter, the speeches of Mayor Pingree and other notables will also be transmitted. Further details of the exercises will be broadcast shortly.

"News of the world! London: Winston Churchill, English

statesman, speaking before the House of Commons yesterday, warned English labor chieftains against socialism, saying that Great Britain and the United States have grown great on the capitalistic system.

"Canada: The giant amphibian, 'Untin Bowler,' on its way to Berlin cut swiftly into Canada on the first leg of its five-thousand-mile flight. The flight, sponsored by the *Chicago Tribune*, is being made to blaze a new mail and commercial route through the skies, forecasting a new era of international good will.

"Rome: The ancient Roman galleys of the Caesars rivaled the modern steamship in luxuries, according to a dispatch which—"

He heard a footstep on the floor behind him, and turned the radio down till it made only a clucking murmur.

His grandson said: "H'lo, Grandfather. What're you doing?"

"Nothing much—just listening to the radio," John Cantrell said. He looked with pleasure at the boy's firm tanned cheeks, with the Cantrell nose just beginning to jut strongly from between the gray-blue eyes that were like his father's. "What you been doing this morning, Tommy?" He saw that pearly drops of sweat hung just under the boy's dark hairline. "Don't tell me you been running races?"

Tommy nodded. "It's hot as blazes out, but the gang of us went up to the park to see the races—well, we got inspired and raced home. . . . Where's mother?" He knew that his mother didn't like to leave his grandfather alone. Grandfather's heart was sort of giving out on him—after all he'd been in the Civil War and lost an arm and was getting on to be eighty-nine, his hair still thick, but all white, the lines deep in his forehead, and two deep vertical creases right above the bridge of his nose between his eyebrows. Tommy sprawled out in the chair near the windows and smiled at his grandfather when a string of firecrackers went off with a sudden popping chatter in the street.

"Upstairs somewhere, but don't worry, she'll be back. Coddles me like a baby," the old man grumbled, pointing at the little bottle and the spoon and the glass of water set out near at hand on the

small table. "A wonder she lets me out of her sight." Just the same, he reflected, there'd been times when he was glad to have Josie so near all the time—the first attack, so sudden, so tearing, the very night after Marius's funeral, had been nearly too much for him. And he remembered with a little fear how he had awakened in the deep of the night with the pain stabbing his left breast and shooting into the stump of his arm, thinking as he woke that the pain was only part of his dream because he had been dreaming again of Antietam. Lucky, he mused, he'd been able to get up and stumble down the hall to Josie's room and waked her for the doctor. Lucky, yes. "You want her for anything special?" he asked.

Tommy shook his head. "Nothing special. But I thought if she was going down to hear Father's speech, we could ride down together."

The old man cocked his head. "If you mean that you hoped she'd let you drive the car a ways, you're much mistaken, bub."

Tommy grinned at him. "Think you're pretty smart, don't you?"

"Smart enough for any fourteen-year-old strategist like you," his grandfather said.

"Well, anyways, do you think Mother'll be going? Did she say?"

John shook his head. "No, she's not," he said absently. He was wondering, as he did now nearly every time he saw the boy, when Tommy would come to know that the relation between his father and mother was a bitter, unhappy one. Some day, if he had any wits at all, he'd realize that their hard reserve, their barely speaking to each other, were just not natural between husband and wife. And he would wonder at something wrong, a wonder that would maybe grow like a poisonous cloud in his mind till he had the answer.

And then who could give him the answer? A month of talk would not explain it. But after he'd lived a good while and got to know people and the ideas that moved them, then maybe he'd understand, and he could pass his own judgment on the right and the

wrong of it. But it would be a tragic thing if the boy were forced to choose between them before he had understanding.

"I hope I'll be here then," he said to himself. "I hope. . . . Maybe I could help to tide him over." And in the meantime—well, neither Josie nor Francis, both loving the boy so, each conducting an invisible campaign for his love, neither would ever betray by word or deed the wretchedness in which they lived and which the old man sensed flowing out of both like a mist when their words lapsed and they sat motionless in the room so harshly aware of one another and yet so unyielding. If the boy had wits—yes, and the right feelings—he'd know it, he'd feel it soon enough now, the cloud of misery in which his mother and father were lost.

It had been about the boy from the beginning, and it had made him a silent child too old for his years—too reserved and a little precocious. But I've done my share for him, the old man thought. And he remembered the winter twilights before the fireplace and the warm spring sun in the backyard while he had told the child of the campaigns and battles of so long ago. Yes, I've had a hand with him, and a good hand, too, he thought happily.

He smiled at Tommy. "You'll be late for the parade," he said, and then leaning forward a little, asked: "How you fixed for funds? Could you . . . ?"

Tommy smiled back at him. "Gosh, Grandfather, I'm rolling in money today. Father gave me a couple of dollars last night, and Mother gave me one this morning—I told her Father had given me some, but she said for me to take hers anyway for an emergency. And now. . . ." He looked humorously at the bill his grandfather was holding out.

"Take it, bub," his grandfather insisted. "Fourth of July comes only once a year. I'd like you to celebrate it in good style."

Tommy came forward then and took the money. "Thanks, Grandfather. I'll buy some rockets and stuff, and we'll set them off tonight, huh? You're not going to bed early, are you?"

"Not if I can beat off your mother," John said. "You'll help me, hey?"

"Sure—I'll make a speech about your rights as an American citizen—better than Father's." He pointed to the radio. "It's still on," he said. "And I got to go—the gang'll be sore if I keep them waiting." He was at the door. "So long, Grandfather."

The old man smiled after the boy a moment, and his fingers sought the radio dial again.

"Brrrrrkrrrkrrrk!—" it said. "Brrrrrk—of Trenton, New Jersey, gripped by terror of the green death which has already killed three and stricken twenty. Health officials confessed their bewilderment in the face of the strange disease.

"In a special holiday attraction at the Imperial Theatre this week, Richard Dix is appearing in *The Wheel of Life*, and Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. and Marcelline Day in *The Jazz Age*. Two great pictures—no change in prices.

"News of the sporting world: Babe Ruth's home run in the eighth, with the bases loaded, broke up a tight ballgame yesterday, and gave the Yankees a 6 to 5 victory over the Red Sox. In another close game, the Chicago Cubs defeated the Cincinnati Reds, 7 to 5. Guy Bush was the winning pitcher.

"Special announcement!—keep tuned to this station for a complete broadcast of the Fourth of July parade and the speeches from the steps of the City Hall. The *Chronicle* has arranged a complete hookup for the broadcasting of all the events by Phil Cantrell, ace radio reporter of this paper. Watch for his new column appearing soon in the *Chronicle*. It will be called "Floating on the Airwaves" and will feature news of your favorite stars of screen and radio.

"The stock market rose to new highs yesterday in many leading issues. Pre-holiday profit-taking was readily absorbed, and industrial averages soared again. U. S. Steel, American Can, General Electric, and Union Carbide led in the rise, with Auburn Motors soaring 44¼ points to a record top of 375. There was some realizing in rail shares, and utilities were slightly lower. It was expected that U. S. Steel, closing yesterday at 196¾, would soon reach 200. As stock prices advanced rapidly, call money declined to 6%. For

complete coverage of the market and market prognostications, see the *Chronicle*—”

Behind him, Josie asked: “Has the local news come on yet?” She sat down on the sofa facing him while the radio clacked on.

“Nothing yet,” he said, taking in the crisp freshness of her cotton dress. “You look mighty smart, Josie. . . . Shall I turn this thing off?”

“You’d miss all the speeches then,” she told him. “I never knew anyone loved oratory like you.” Even when she spoke lightly, her eyes stayed sombre.

He said quickly: “Your lanky son was here for a minute.”

“Didn’t he . . . ?”

“He was going up to see you, but I thought you were busy what with Delia gone for the day, so I sent him on his way. . . . Besides his gang was waiting.”

He smiled to himself, and Josie, seeing his expression said: “How much money’d you give him?”

“Now Josie, I—”

“You’re spoiling him,” she said.

“I’ve got to do something with my money,” he said heatedly. “He’s a good boy. Don’t worry.”

“That’s not it,” she told him. “I just don’t want him to feel that money is important.” She hesitated. “The way it is to his father.”

He leaned forward and snapped off the radio, and looked about deliberately at the cool white curtains lifting slowly in the warm July breeze, the shadows of the maple leaves fleeting across the faded clear red rug and up the wall across the picture of his grandfather in his regimentals. The sun glinted upon the mahogany of the chairs and sofa as the curtains lifted and fell. “This is a handsome room, Josie,” he said. “Your mother would be proud of your housekeeping, at least.”

“It’s easy enough,” she told him absently. Then she looked up and said quickly: “‘At least?’—what are you talking about, Father?”

“About you and Francis,” he said. “And Tommy.”

She made a gesture of exasperation. “You just can’t stop think-

ing of that, can you? As if you haven't been after me year in and year out about it! As if we hadn't discussed it a thousand times already!"

"I know, Josie. . . . But I don't mean to plague you. It's just when I see the boy that I—" He broke off, and said strongly: "Will you tear him in half some day?"

"Don't talk like that, Father. Please!"

"Or will you just wait and let him tear himself in half, trying to decide between you?"

"It won't be like that," she said weakly.

"Oh, it won't! Godalmighty, who's going to straighten it out for him?" He sat up and glared at her.

"Your heart. . . ." she murmured.

"Quit fussing at me," he said. His voice changed. "I don't mean it for the boy's sake alone, Josie. It's you two I'm thinking of as well. You're both getting on now. I sort of hoped before my time came to see you and Francis happy again." He went on quickly: "But it's not for myself I'm asking. Let's have no make-believe for my sake or the boy's."

Josie said quietly: "Don't you think that I've thought of everything you've said? The thought of Tommy in the next few years. . . . I've lain awake night after night thinking about him. About Francis too. . . . The way he looks at Tommy, at me." She looked away from him. "I still love him, you know that, Father."

"Yes, yes," the old man murmured. "Then it's about time you. . . . After all these years. . . ." His voice trailed away.

She drew her brows together, and pushed the gray-streaked hair back from her forehead: "We're back at the beginning again. . . . One year or a hundred, it doesn't matter. I can no more put away my hatred of what he does, of what he's done, than I can put away my love of him. I'm bound to both. Many a time I've resolved to put away one or the other. I've told myself we'd separate, live apart." Her father exclaimed incoherently and she nodded. "Yes, maybe a divorce even. . . . It would be hard, but I'd get used to

it after a while. I'd have to. A clean break, I thought, would settle everything. But when I'd see Francis, see the pinched look on his face, it was no use, I couldn't do it. Then. . . ."

No, she won't give in, the old man thought despairingly. She'll never give in.

"Then," Josie said, "I tried the other way. I told myself what his business was didn't matter, that he couldn't help it, that he had to run with the rest of the world. I told myself that he was right. I told myself over and over again. But it was no good. Because then I would think of Mr. Schaeffer with his skull broken in and though I could make myself understand that it was not Francis who struck the blow, yet it was his hand that touched the club somewhere. So I couldn't do it—no, not all the common sense in the world could bring me to say Francis was right, or even to say that he could not help it. Because deep down I felt he could have." She clenched her hands in her lap, and looked at her father directly. "He could have. You know it."

He could not look at her. He lowered his eyes, and said in a low voice: "I could have too. You must blame me then as well as Francis."

"No," she said quickly, "no, you were not in it." The sunlight moved upon her thin face. "No, Father, you mustn't reproach yourself."

No, he thought sadly, I was out of it because I was afraid to be in it. I played on both sides. So Marius is dead for what he believed, and I am still alive. I'm the one that deserved to die. Half to himself he said: "If there was another time, another chance, I'd do differently. I would." With open fingers he struck the arm of his chair lightly.

"You!" Josie said. "Thank Heaven, I can keep an eye on you." She got up. "Let's not worry any more, Father. . . . Maybe things'll work themselves out somehow."

"They've got to," he said doggedly. "For the boy's sake."

Impatiently she turned, her fingers on the radio dial. "Look, Father, if Francis and I can't straighten things out, we can't. We've

both tried, but it's no use. I've made up my mind that if Tommy has to suffer because of us, then he will. And if he's a man, he'll stand up to the pain, and bear it. Fight it, if he has to. How can anyone avoid the pain of life? Will you tell me that?"

By running away, he reflected bitterly. Like me. "All right, Josie," he said. "If that's the way it's got to be with you."

"Yes," she asserted, "that's the way it's got to be," and turned the dial of the radio, saying: "Your speeches will be starting soon." She paused by his chair, and kissed him lightly on the forehead. "Now, stop worrying, Father. . . . Call up the stairs to me when the speeches start." She went out.

The radio said: "Brrrk—brrrkekek—after a hot chase. Overtaking the car, police questioned Richard Hackley, 36, of 92 Kempton Street, and his wife, Margaret, but could get no explanation of their mile-a-minute flight until an examination of the car revealed thirty gallons of alcohol concealed in two large tanks under the floor boards. The pair will be arraigned sometime today at a special session on the usual charges of illegal possession and transportation.

"Continuing their drive against liquor offenders, police also seized yesterday at an old barn on Crandall Road on the outskirts of the city an elaborate still and about one hundred and forty gallons of alcohol, destroying eight or nine barrels of mash at the same time. The owner of the barn, James L. Corum of 57 Elwood Avenue, this city, denied all knowledge of the still, saying that he had not been near the barn for some months. He will be arraigned at the special session also.

"In Washington yesterday there was a revival of talk on the repeal of the Prohibition Amendment. A series of special articles in the *Chronicle*, beginning on Monday of next week, will review the status of Prohibition to date, and reveal the trend of national sentiment after eleven years of trial. . . ."

While the staccato voice rattled on, the old man, for the thousandth time, turned over in his mind the conflict between Francis and Josie, still fretted by fear of the tragic choice that Tommy might have to make some day. When that day comes, he thought,

maybe I'll be gone anyway. . . . He shook his head quickly, and then leaned forward as a new voice crackled on the radio:

"This is Phil Cantrell, your radio reporter, folks. Well, here we are on the reviewing stand in front of the City Hall to bring you the picture of the Independence Day celebration and the speeches of the celebrities here on the platform. It's a beautiful day, warm and inspiring, with not a cloud in the sky, and the sidewalks are packed with folks waiting to see the parade and cheer Old Glory as she passes by over the heads of the marchers. . . . Ah!—and here we are with the first selection on the program: *The Red, White and Blue*, with Miss Verna Pulsifer, music teacher in the public schools, as soloist."

The music blared out, and the words echoed shrilly from the walnut box: "*O Columbia, the gem of the ocean, the home of the brave and the free, the shrine of each patriot's devotion—*"

John Cantrell grimaced. "Don't like screaming sopranos," he said to himself, and turned the dial until only a thin thread of sound spurted into the room. When the music stopped, he turned the radio up again, and Phil's voice said:

". . . distinguished jurist, Judge Woodward."

The old man remembered that Josie wanted to hear the speeches. He got up and went out into the hall. "Josie," he called. "The speeches."

"I'll be right down, Father," she told him.

He took his chair again by the radio.

". . . and not take our liberty lightly," Judge Woodward was saying, "for a liberty that becomes license is a liberty that destroys itself. Too much freedom can be as destructive of the common good as too little. Therefore, let each one of us be content in the place America has found for him—the farmer at his plough, the worker at his bench, the shopkeeper at his counter, the businessman at his desk. With such contentment—"

John grinned at his daughter as she came into the room. "I called you too soon, Josie," he said. "It's that windbag, Woodward, with the same speech he's spouted for the last forty years. Turns it off

and on like a faucet. No matter what happens."

"But Francis—has he spoken yet?" Josie asked him.

"No," he said. "He's the next one, I guess." With quick curiosity he turned to look at her, but her face was impassive, and he hitched his chair forward to listen with derisive grunts to the judge's peroration.

Then Phil Cantrell's voice was saying: ". . . our next speaker, Councilman Francis Connell."

"Make it a little louder," Josie said to her father.

"Ladies and Gentlemen," Francis said, "for many years it was the custom to read publicly on this particular day the Declaration of Independence. Of late years this custom has lapsed. Why, I do not know. But I recall with what pleasure in the years before the War I used to listen to the reading of that great document, the foundation stone of our liberties. You will forgive me then if I do not speak to you from a prepared address, but rather choose, with your approval, I know, to read to you those words which brought us to this day and this life in America that we know and love."

John Cantrell nodded briskly, pleased beyond expression. He glanced at Josie, seeing her eyes shine with an emotion he could not fathom.

"'. . . *certain unalienable rights,*'" Francis Connell read into the microphone, "*that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. . . .*" He uttered the words slowly and gravely while his eyes searched for his son in the crowd near the platform. "''. . . *and to institute a new government, laying its foundations on such principles and organizing its powers in such form—*'" He finally saw Tommy standing almost directly beneath him, close enough so that Francis could see the quiet composure of his look. His heart moved to the boy. He read: "''. . . *governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes. . . .*'"

Tommy was lifting his hand in front of his chest and waving at him. Involuntarily Francis raised his hand from the page in front

of him as if to wave back, but caught himself in time. He lifted his voice. "*. . . abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty to throw off such government. . . .*"

With his son's eyes upon him, his mind groped back over the years, turning to a memory of another Fourth of July when he had heard these words read and had looked with the same composed love upon the reader. Twenty, twenty-two years ago?—could it be so long?—and then the memory surged and flowered, bright, enduring, immutable under the burden of the heavy years, of Josie Cantrell in a light blue dress of some stuff so fine that it floated with the rise and fall of her bosom as she read the words he was reading now, her voice vibrant upon the warm air, and all the faces, flushed with summer and the warmth of her voice, lifted like a spray of blossoms across the floor of the City Hall to drink in the words as their grave weight fell among them. Josie! he said in his heart while his eyes touched his son's glance, and the words fell slowly from his lips: "*. . . refused to pass other laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of representation in the legislature. . . .*"

It'll be all right now, he thought, everything'll be fine now, Josie, fine for me and you and the boy, at once imagining the light weight of her thin body close against him and her hair tickling his face as in the long-gone days, the days of the quick months and the brief years of their happiness before she had put the knife, the wall, the mist, between them. "*. . . has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people. . . .*"

So it's my surrender, Josie, he thought, while his eyes moved along the page, today I'm surrendering to win you again and to save the boy the pain of our misery, the pain that we've got no right to put upon him. . . . He wondered how long the parade would last, how soon he could leave the reviewing stand so as to keep his noon appointment with Harvey Cantrell. If Harvey had

the idea that he was coming to ask him for market advice alone, then Harvey was due for quite a surprise. But it didn't matter any more what Harvey thought. He had made up his mind to quit, and the saints themselves, never mind Harvey, couldn't make him change it now. Not that he wanted to give in to Josie— "*. . . have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred, to disavow these usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our connections and our correspondence. . .*"—but he could not fight any more. It was killing him inside, and not all the whiskey in the world could kill the deep unrelenting pain, the black dog that had torn at his heart for so long.

But it was not surrender, he assured himself, since he still held to the right of his side of their conflict. It was a truce. But a truce to last for the rest of their lives. They would remake their marriage somehow. . . . Because I couldn't stand much more, he thought swiftly. It would kill me. "*. . . to do all other acts and things which INDEPENDENT STATES may of right do. And for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of DIVINE PROVIDENCE, we mutually pledge to each other, our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.*" He began to read the names of the Signers.

When he looked up again, he saw with annoyance that a good part of the crowd standing back in the Square had turned away from him, the people craning their necks at a car which was stopped among them. Somehow it had got past the police who were supposed to keep the Square clear of traffic while the exercises were going on, and now was confronted by three policemen. Fine! Francis thought angrily. Fine police work. Let the idiot through to begin with, and then get him stopped right in front of me.

He paused in his reading until the police had cleared a path for the car and started it on its way, with one of the officers riding on the running board. Then he resumed his reading of the names: "*George Wythe; Richard Henry Lee; Thomas Jefferson; Benjamin Harrison. . .*" Maybe, he was thinking, Josie and he and

the boy would take a trip around the world. Tommy would be wild about the idea. And when they got back, maybe they'd get a place in the country. Out towards Williston perhaps—a small farm where he could putter around in the garden, grow a few vegetables. The country would be good for a growing boy. And good for old John too. He lifted his head from the page and saw Tommy, with a wide mischievous grin on his face, now waving unashamedly at him. Holding back his answering grin with difficulty, Francis finished his reading, bowed to the rattle of the crowd's hands, and sat down. He looked quickly at his watch when Phil Cantrell went up to the microphone again, and then at the windows of the Bank up the Square. The Mayor's speech, and then the parade—he'd get up to Harvey's office in plenty of time.

WHEN the Ford got wedged in the crowd, Louie Davis turned from the wheel towards the back seat where Irene, still moaning a little, though not so loudly as when they started, leaned against Dave Bandler. "We're stuck—what are we going to do?" His voice trembled. "Irene?" he murmured.

"Keep calm, Louie," Dave said. "I'll take care of this." Rapidly he lowered the window on his side of the car.

Lieutenant Mike Sheehan poked his head in at the window, and asked: "Now where did you think you were goin'?"

Louie twisted towards him, but Dave said: "Listen, I'm Doctor Bandler. I've got a very sick girl here, and we've got to get to the hospital right away."

Irene moaned again, and someone pressed up against the car said excitedly: "They got a dyin' woman in there!"

The Lieutenant twisted about on the running board and looked at the avid flushed faces twisting eagerly from side to side on the long stalks of their upstretched necks. "Get back!" he commanded in contempt. To the two patrolmen standing near him, he said: "You men get up ahead there, and shove those people back. Get this car through quick, and send Briggs up in the squad car for me." To Louie, he said: "All right, now, lad, get movin'."

Fumblingly Louie started the car while people, craning to see, moved reluctantly away on either side.

"We'll be clear in a minute," the Lieutenant said to the back of Louie's head. "Then you can push 'er as fast as she'll go. Take 'er right through the lights." He turned to Dave, nodding at Irene's pale face where the sweat ran in little streams from her temples: "Baby?"

Dave smiled. "A little unexpected," he said. "That's why. . . ."

"Sure, I know," Mike said. "Ain't I got four of my own?"

The car rocketed into Glenhill Avenue, and the road was clear. Irene had stopped moaning. She lay pale against Dave's shoulder, and Mike looked with compassion upon her. "Poor girl," he said. "It's never easy, is it? . . . My last one came hard. But that young Doctor McKenna—you know him? He brought her through it in great style. . . . Ah, it's an excitin' life you fellers have, I'll tell you that, Doctor. A good life, too. . . . Hold her to it, lad," he told Louie, "we'll be there in a coupla minutes now. . . ."

"Irene?" Louie muttered hoarsely.

Dave leaned forward and touched the shoulder rearing back towards them. "She's all right, Louie. Believe me. . . ."

"She's so quiet," Louie said.

The car curved up the driveway to the door of the hospital. Mike Sheehan hopped nimbly off the running board, and pulled the door open. "Would you like a hand with her now?" he asked worriedly. "The poor girl."

Irene said weakly, smiling a little: "It's not so bad now—I can make it." With Dave on one side and Louie fearfully supporting her by the arm on the other, they came into the cool dim lobby of the hospital, sniffing at its strange air of floor-polish, flowers, and ether.

"Well, here we are," Mike said. "I'll be goin' out on the steps now to wait for my chariot." He nodded towards Louie who was bending over Irene seated in an armchair. "And tell the lad there not to forget me when he's passin' out the cigars." He grinned.

"I'll tell him," Dave said. "And thanks for all you've done. . . ."

He went up to the girl at the desk. "Doctor Hinckley here yet?" he asked. "I'm Doctor Bandler."

"We got in touch with him right after you called, Doctor," she told him. "He's waiting upstairs for you now."

So far he had held back his bitterness, but now it rose in him, and he said: "If I promise to be polite, will he let me talk to him?"

"You're a scream, Doctor," she said as he turned back to Louie and Irene.

On the way up in the elevator, Irene's pains began again, and Louie's eyes prayed into Dave's.

"Don't worry, Louie," he said, seeing in his friend's eyes the questions he had to answer soon. After the nurse had taken charge of Irene, he led Louie into the efficiently cheerful reception room. "Wait here, Louie, and don't worry. The nurse is getting Irene ready in her room, and I'm going down to talk to Doctor Hinckley about her."

The question came: "But why do you need another doctor? Is Irene . . . ?"

It's begun, Dave thought swiftly. "No, no. She's all right." He blurted out: "I'm not on the staff here, Louie, so Doctor Hinckley will have to take care of her now."

"You mean you're not allowed to practice in this hospital?" Louie's darkened eyes stared at him. "But you know her case! You . . . then why'd you bring her here? Is something . . . ?" The fear of something terrible leaped up and shone in his look.

Dave felt himself sweating. "Look, Louie," he said quickly, "I can't stop to explain the whole thing now. Doctor Hinckley's waiting for me. . . . I was going to deliver Irene at home. But now she's three weeks ahead of her time"—he hesitated, watching Louie's trembling mouth—"and there's some complications—well, I decided hospitalization was the best thing for her. That's all."

"But if it wasn't dangerous, we wouldn't be here?" Louie asked weakly.

"No, no," Dave reassured him impatiently. "No danger, just not taking any chances, that's all. . . . Now will you pipe down

and let me go see Hinckley?" He seized a magazine from the low table and gave it to Louie. "Here . . . read a story or something. I'll be back in a few minutes."

He went out to find Doctor Hinckley, thin, precise, impersonal, his pince-nez glittering. "Hope I haven't broken up your holiday plans, Doctor," he said to him.

"It's all right," Hinckley said.

He looked up inquiringly, and Dave, talking quickly against the other's impersonal glance, told him about Irene's miscarriage three years ago and gave him the particulars of her present condition: ". . . blood pressure suddenly up fifty points this morning," he said. "Edema, and headache too. . . . a bad pre-eclampsia."

Hinckley nodded once or twice, and Dave went on: "She's already had some medication. . . . At home," he added, thinking: You cold fish, did you think I'd presume to give her medication in this hospital of which you are a God Almighty member of the staff and I am not? Harriet would be wild if she could see him now, so polite, so deferential to the great man on the staff.

When he finished, Hinckley said: "Let's have a look at her," and they went up to Irene's room together.

"Strong, forty seconds—about every ten minutes," the nurse reported. Irene was flushed, the small capillaries of her face showing crimson even under her flush. She began to moan in a light high tone.

Dave said: "I'll just go out and talk to her husband for a moment," and Hinckley looked relieved as Dave thought he would. "That's me—tactful all over," he said to himself, walking down the long corridor.

Louie looked up hungrily when he came in. "How is she, Dave? Is she . . . ?"

Dave smiled. "Listen, Louie, don't get so wrought up. It'll be a few hours yet anyway. . . . Look," he said, "why don't you come home and have lunch with me and Harriet?"

"No . . . no," Louie stammered, "I couldn't—I couldn't eat anything anyway." He managed to smile weakly. "Too excited, I

guess. . . . You'll be back, Dave? Soon?"

"I've got a couple of calls," Dave said, "but I won't be long." He gave Louie a quick pat on the shoulder. "Some time this afternoon you'll have a fine Fourth of July baby—a little patriot. Now, don't worry, Louie."

Louie shook his head, and as Dave went out, picked up a magazine.

Every time a nurse passed, he raised his head hopefully, his dumb appealing look falling in vain upon her hurrying profile. He leafed through the magazine several times, hardly aware of what he was doing, seeing only a black and white blur on the pages. He stood up and walked back and forth from window to window, his mind slowly numbing with terror. When he turned away from the windows, a nurse was coming in, followed by Irene's father and mother. "My wife—" he said to the nurse, "is she . . . ?"

"She's just gone down to the delivery-room, Mr. Davis."

"But how is she?"

"She's getting on all right," the nurse told him briskly, and went out.

"Well!" Mrs. Curtis said, "you might have called us!"

Louie made a vague gesture with his hands as she sat down, her look hard upon him.

"We've done nothing but phone you for the last hour," her husband said.

"And that doctor of yours," she added, "we couldn't get him either."

"I'm sorry," Louie told them, "but everything kind of happened all at once. . . ."

"I finally made Fred drive me to your house. . . . The woman upstairs told me you'd all driven off together."

"The doctor thought—"

She interrupted him: "Where's the doctor now?"

"I thought Irene planned to have the baby at home," Mr. Curtis said.

"The doctor thought she'd better come here. . . . There's some

kind of complications," Louie mumbled.

"I told you from the beginning she should've been here," Mrs. Curtis said.

"Penny-wise and pound-foolish, my boy," Fred Curtis said. He smoothed his iron-gray hair with his hand and looked at his wife.

"Mr. Curtis told you long ago that he would be only too glad to pay for her stay here," she said.

"Dave Bandler was going to take care of her at home," Louie said. "He's a friend of mine. I wanted to pay for Irene myself." He looked away from them to the corridor.

His mother-in-law sniffed. "A lot of good it did you. If you'd had a reputable doctor right from the beginning. . . . Is he here now?"

Louie shook his head. "I don't know," he told her. "I don't understand. He's not on the staff here, he told me, so now another doctor, Doctor Hinckley, is taking care of her."

"Ah!" she told him, "there you are. That's what you get for taking up with someone cheap."

Mr. Curtis shook his head gravely. "I wouldn't trust a Jewish doctor. Flashy, yes, but when it comes right down to solid knowledge. . . ." He shook his head again.

"Of course!" Mrs. Curtis said. "You should've known better than to look for a bargain doctor!" She smoothed the white gloves on her hands.

"He's a good doctor," Louie said.

"But evidently not quite good enough for this hospital, is that it?" Mr. Curtis asked him. He lighted a cigar, went across the room for an ash-stand, and set it down carefully beside his chair.

"Now, what about these complications?" Mrs. Curtis asked. "You realize what might seem complications to your friend, might be a very simple matter to a man like Doctor Hinckley."

"I don't know," Louie said numbly. "I don't know." He kept looking past them towards the corridor.

"Of course, in my opinion," his mother-in-law said, "Irene should never have got into this condition."

"What?" Louie said.

Mr. Curtis laid his cigar down on the stand and leaned forward. "Mrs. Curtis means that after Irene's—uh—miscarriage three years ago, we thought you had given up the idea of having a baby."

"After all," Mrs. Curtis said, "if a woman can't have a baby, she shouldn't. That seems very simple to me."

"Mrs. Curtis and I both think that a little more—uh—care on your part, some restraint might—"

"What?" Louie asked.

"Mr. Curtis means—"

"I know what he means," Louie said. He stood up. "But Irene wanted—I mean I tried to tell her, but she—"

"You should have known better," Mrs. Curtis said. "After all, you know how frail Irene is. I never allowed her to do any housework at all."

Mr. Curtis said: "She's been working pretty hard lately, has she?"

"Why doesn't someone come?" Louie said. "I want to know how she is. Irene, I—" He wiped his forehead with the back of his hand. "It's hot here," he told them.

Mrs. Curtis said: "If anything should happen to Irene—" She looked down at the gloves in her lap.

Louie turned upon them. "Let me alone. Both of you. Let me alone!"

"Look here," Mr. Curtis said, "you can't—"

"After all, she is our daughter!" Mrs. Curtis said.

"She's not yours any more. She's my wife. She's mine!" Louie said furiously. "Get away from here, and leave us alone!"

"Well!" said Mrs. Curtis. "It's plain to see now what a mistake Irene made. . . . She can't say we didn't warn her."

"Young man," her husband said, "for your own good, I advise you to watch your tongue. This happens also to be a public institution so that your orders carry no weight here." He glared at Louie who turned from one to the other and then went to the window. His back towards them, he let the heavy tears of fear and

rage roll down his cheeks. "Irene," he whispered to himself, "Irene, where are you . . . ?"

OUTSIDE, Dave blinked in the bright sunlight and walked slowly towards the carstop. Should have brought them out here in my car, he thought aimlessly, lolling against the post while he waited for the trolley. Or could have called Harriet to come and get me. But, feeling a resurgence of his bitterness, he didn't want to see Harriet yet—better wait till he had cooled off a little himself. Too bad if both of them got all steamed up.

The trolley came, and he rode downtown, surprised, as the car drew near the Square, to hear the band music, and see over the heads of the crowd the flags floating by and the steel shine of the bayonets. Must be nearly over now, he thought, pushing in among the people massed on the sidewalk. He was excited by the deep sound of the music vibrating in his body and the crush of the crowd. He thought of the days when he was a kid watching the Fourth of July parade, and a sudden sad nostalgia troubled him while he stood and remembered. "Time flies, all right," he said to himself as the floats began to go by. Life was swell when you were a kid, but it was different when you grew up. Responsibilities—making a living, making a home, worrying about getting somewhere. . . . It would be swell being a kid again, ducking in and out of the crowd, chasing up to the Turk's for ice cream cones, feeling like a Wild West hero with your repeater weighing down the back pocket of your pants. He took off his Panama and wiped his brows, smoothing his thick wavy hair in which the first small gray hairs dully shone.

The good old days, he thought, when you were a kid without a worry in the world, and the whole world was beautiful and everything was good, and the days just went by so serenely you never knew they were going until all of a sudden they were gone, and then you had to push and shove to get on your feet and keep on them until you wedged yourself against a stone wall and found you

couldn't get any further and there was a taste in your mouth as bitter as mineral salts. Yes, like the bitterness he was tasting now while the flag was going by and everyone was celebrating Independence Day, and he couldn't deliver his friend's baby because he wasn't on the hospital staff because they wouldn't have a Jew on the hospital staff. . . . So Harriet said.

But maybe not. He took off his hat as the Legion flags went by, thinking: I should be marching with them now. . . . Maybe only because there's room for just so many on the staff, maybe only because I'm still young, maybe only because I haven't made some kind of a name for myself. And yet maybe, at last, because I'm a Jew. Because no Catholics are on the staff either. No one like McKenna, for instance. Young, too, but good. And both he and McKenna already passed over twice when there were vacancies, passed over for men even younger, and not so good either. Medicine exclusively for white Protestant Americans, he thought bitterly, while his hat came off to the last flag in the parade.

WHEN the parade was over, Joe Cascione looked at his watch and pushed his way through the people streaming away from the Square. He got into his maroon roadster and turned it away from the Square towards Glenhill Avenue. The light showed red, and while he waited for it to change, he saw Lieutenant Mike Sheehan close by, herding people up on to the sidewalks. He leaned out a little and said: "Hiya, Captain."

Sheehan's eyes slid over him and the car. "H'lo, bum," he said flatly, and moved on.

Joe smiled after him, and patted the rich red leather of the seat beside him. "Screw you, flatfoot," he murmured, "I know what's burnin' you up."

The light changed, and he shifted gears, letting the accelerator down gently and watching the speedometer because in the rear-view mirror he saw Sheehan looking after him. He was not going to be picked up and bothered with some cheap speeding charge, or have a squad car trailing him. Besides he had plenty of time. He

would have a nice ride in the country; relax, before he reached the old man's farm.

At the corner of Glenhill Avenue, he slowed up and pulled over to the curb. He had seen Dave Bandler, walking slowly along, his head down, his Panama swinging slowly at his side. "Hey, Dave!" he said as the other came abreast of him.

Dave looked up and came across the sidewalk. "Hello, Joe," he said.

They shook hands.

"I saw you moochin' along as if you lost your last friend in the world," Joe said. "You'll get a stroke walkin' in this sun. . . . Hop in." He swung open the door of the car. "Goin' home?"

"No, I was walking up to see a friend of mine, Neil McKenna," Dave told him, "but I might's well get a lift home. I'll see him later."

"Well, what's new?" Joe asked as he turned the car. "See any of the old gang lately?"

"Have I? I just left Louie Davis and his wife at the hospital—Louie'll be a proud poppa in a couple of hours."

"No kiddin'?" Joe said. "That's swell! I was meanin' to look Louie up lately, but with one thing 'n' another—you know how it is."

"Sure," Dave said, "I know."

"So Louie's gonna have a kid? Jes's, it seems just yesterday he was a kid himself. Remember, Dave? Remember the good ol' days when we were kids?"

Dave smiled. "Believe it or not, Joe, it's just what I was thinking of when you called me."

"It's different now," Joe said. "The Fourtha July's ain't what they used to be. Now the kids are all wised up, there's too much tearin' around, people are goin' nuts tearin' around."

"It's the stock market that's got them all excited," Dave said.

"They can shove the stock market," Joe said vehemently twisting from the wheel. "I wouldn't throw my money in that sink no matter what anyone said. Even the biggest banker in town. I got

better ways of throwin' my jack away. Like this little job here." He patted the glittering chrome steering wheel.

"The country's booming," Dave said. "Don't you want to get in on it?"

"I'll do my own boomin'," Joe said, "the way I always did. . . . The doctor racket must be good if you're in the market, Dave."

"Pretty good," Dave said. He was thinking that if he put some more into the market, with plenty of margin and let it ride . . . and if McKenna could raise some money . . . then maybe the two of them could start their own little private hospital. Why not? "What you say, Joe?" he asked.

Joe laughed. "You're like all the rest of the mugs, Dave. Mention the market to you, and you get all dreamy. Your eyes fill up with dollar signs."

Dave asked: "And how's your business, Joe?"

Joe's teeth flashed in his brown face. "Good," he said. "Swell. As long as people want it, I'll sell it."

"Risky, isn't it?" Dave asked warily.

Joe shrugged. "Maybe a little more than other businesses. But I manage. Of course, you gotta stand in with the right people, and you gotta know where to lay it on the line. Protection—you know what I mean?" He took his right hand from the steering wheel and rubbed his forefinger and thumb together.

Dave nodded.

"But, then, I figure every business needs protection. Y'know—guards, f'r instance, the way they have in the bank. Bookkeepers. Lawyers. I'm payin' off plenty, believe me. And the competition is tough." He grinned as the car drew up in front of Dave's house. "But there's still plenty left for little Joe." He rubbed his fingers together again as he brought the car to a stop in front of Dave's house. "Those your kids on the porch? That's swell, Dave. . . . Call them over. How old are they?"

Dave told him that Ruthie was seven, and Sam, five.

When the children climbed timidly up onto the running board, Joe patted them lightly. "Hiya, kids." He reached into his breast

pocket and brought out a dark red wallet. "Matches the upholstery, d'y' notice?" he said. From the wallet he drew two bills, and over Dave's protests gave one each to the children. "There, buy yourself some ice cream cones, kids."

They held the bills, looking at their father who was saying incoherently: "No, please, Joe. You shouldn't. They don't. . . ."

"Ah, can it," Joe said. "It's for old times' sake when we were kids and didn't have a quarter between us. You don't have to get tough with me, Dave."

"All right, Joe, if you put it that way. . . . Say thanks to Joe Big-hearted here," he said to the children.

They mumbled their thanks, holding the bills gingerly, and Dave got out of the car. "Thanks, Joe. . . . I'll be seeing you," he said.

"Don't do anything I wouldn't do," Joe said, grinning at him. As he went, he waved to the kids, and they waved back.

Driving out along the Pike towards the farm, he took a deep breath of the warm summer air and looked out across the fields where the corn stood knee-high already and the trees marched off the swell of the earth towards the haze on the horizon. The motor hummed deep, and he felt swell. And Dave was sitting pretty—a doctor, a couple of swell kids. He and Dave, the sewer-digger's son and the Jew junkman's boy, had come a long way since they were kids running wild on the streets.

The trees drew in close as he turned off the Pike onto the dirt road, noticing how some of the nearer branches of the trees were stripped and broken. "That's the trucks," he said to himself. He'd send Dave a case of good stuff—private stock. None of that crap from the alky-cookers. And Louie, too. But the poor sucker wouldn't use any booze. He'd put a couple of sawbucks in an envelope for the kid and send them up to his house with Connie or one of the other boys.

The house was set on a slight roll of the ground so that when he turned down the rutted track he saw it shining white against the sky, with the further edge of the river showing behind it and the

two little green islands floating on the water. It was a funny twist that it was once Eddie Mundy's house. Eddie sure got a kick the first time he had brought him out and Eddie had recognized the house. "Sure, I'd know it in a million," Eddie had said to all of them while they were eating the real spaghetti dinner Joe had promised him. It was the first and the last time he had ever seen Eddie excited. A cold leech, with eyes like gray ice. They had seemed to go deeper into his head every time he looked around. After dinner he took Joe and Elena up to the attic and showed them his initials E.M., scratched deep into the dark brick of the chimney. Maybe Eddie and Elena. . . . He scowled. With Elena maybe Eddie could be too smooth for his own good even if he was in right with Connell and the other big shots downtown. A smooth worker . . . and a hog for money. Costing me plenty, but he's worth it, thinking of the four raps Eddie had already beaten for him: ". . . discharged for lack of evidence. But the Court warns you, Cascione—"

"Screw you, too, Judge Woodward," he mumbled, smiling a little. He parked the car near the barn, took a quick look inside, and went up the flower-bordered pathway to the house.

"Hello, farmer," he said to Leo as he came into the kitchen. "Where's everybody?"

"Hello, wise guy," Leo said. "Pete took Caterina and the kids into town to see the parade. The old man's out in back pattin' his grapevines on the head. . . . Anything else you want to know, wise guy?" Neatly, trimly made, his head sleek and black, he looked like a knife half out of the sheath.

Always hated me because Mamma liked me best, Joe thought.

"Elena went into town, too. With your pal, Mundy. Another wise guy."

"If Mundy isn't levelin' with Elena," Joe said, "I'll cut his heart out."

"Such tough talk," Leo said mincingly.

"Cut the kiddin'," Joe said. "I mean it."

Leo looked at him. "You don't have to put on your act with me,

wise guy. . . . Elena'll take care of herself. She's no spring chicken."

"I mean what I said, pal or no pal," Joe told him.

"Sure," Leo said, grinning crookedly. He went on: "You're a great one to be worryin' about Elena from what I hear about you and the women."

"Says who?"

"Oh, I heard a couple of your thugs talkin' out in the barn one night. . . . They said plenty."

"I'll see that those bastards keep their mouths shut!"

"Little Mussolini," said Leo. He walked to the window and looked out. "Pa's got a thing or two to tell you."

"Oh, I suppose you been shootin' off your mouth, too?"

"Nah, don't get excited," Leo told him. He lighted a cigarette. "He just wants to tell you to get out of the barn with your stuff."

"What's that?" Joe said. "What's that?"

"You're stutterin'," Leo said. "Yeah, you got to get out. You'll have to find a new hideout for your booze."

"You're kiddin'!" Joe said. But he was already going towards the back door. From the top of the steps, he peered out under the straggling trellises covered thick with the deep-notched leaves of the vines. "Hey, Pa!" he shouted. "Pa!" After a minute, his father's bulky body in faded blue dungarees appeared on the path among the vines. Joe waved him up, and his father, lifting the spray gun in his hand, nodded vigorously to show he was coming. Joe went back into the house.

"Well?" Leo asked.

"He's comin'," Joe said. "If you're not lyin', it's a hell of a dirty job you're pullin' on me."

"Me?" Leo said. "I don't have any say around here. Pete and Pa—they're the ones that run the place. For all of me, you could bring the stuff right in the house provided you paid enough."

"I'm payin' enough right now," Joe told him. "You'd bleed me dry if you could."

Leo shrugged. "Why not? Like you always said, business is business."

Massimo Cascione came into the room. His white hair was cropped close to his head—Elena had done the cutting—and his face, shiny with sweat, was a deep reddish brown.

Joe said: "Jes's, Pa, you oughtn't to be workin' in this heat—it's killin'."

"You'll have to give 'm more oil than that," Leo said, grinning again.

"Shut up," Joe said. "If you got no say around here, shut up." He turned to his father who was running his stubby hand up and down the shaft of the spray gun. "Listen, Papa," he said, "is it right what Leo says? You're not goin' to let me use the barn any more?"

His father nodded. "Si," he said. "Elena, Caterina no like. No good for the kids, Pete says. The bad men work for you—vigliacchi. 'S dirty talk—not good for the kids. Maybe policeman come, too. No good." He shook his head. "No, not good."

"What the hell do they know about it?" Joe snarled. "The men ain't here but two, three times a month—the punks, I'll tell 'em to keep their mouths shut when the kids are around! And I'm payin' you good money, ain't I, for the use of the barn? Jes's I must've paid you already more'n the whole place is worth."

His father shrugged his shoulders, "Pete, Elena say is no good. Caterina, too." He cradled the spray gun in his hands.

"He's not even listenin' to you, wise guy," Leo said. "He wants to get back to his grapes."

"Who's he to talk about me?" Joe said. "He makes wine, don't he? And everyone around here helps him, don't they?"

"Sure, sure," Leo said, "but we ain't peddlin' it around speak-easies and dives. We drink it ourselves. And we ain't afraid to drink our own stuff either." His crooked grin flashed on his face.

Massimo at the door said: "Goo'-by," and went out, blinking, as the sun flashed upon his face.

"They can't do this to me," Joe said. "I came out to tell 'em

there's four trucks comin' in t'night. I got a lot of jack sunk in this load."

"Not in here, they ain't," Leo said.

"No?" Joe said. "I'll wait till Pete gets back. No use talkin' to a cheap punk like you."

"Who's askin' you to?" Leo said. "Go on, burn up by yourself." He went out, turning his malicious grin back at his brother until the door closed behind him.

"WHERE'S Hilda and Elizabeth?" Emily Schaeffer said to her son as he came up onto the porch.

Al sat down beside her. "Hilda wanted to say hello to her folks, so I left her and Bessie there with the car and walked up. They'll be here soon."

"How was the parade?"

"Just like always," Al said. "Bessie was crazy about it, though. When I marched by, she started screaming: 'Daddy! Daddy! I wanna march, too.' The boys gave me quite a ribbing. . . . Cute kid." He smiled fondly.

"The whole Post turn out?" His mother asked.

"Nearly a hundred percent," he told her. "I was surprised not to see Dave Bandler. He's a good Legion man. Never misses a meeting. But someone told me he was out on a case."

They sat for a while, his mother rocking gently back and forth, and watched people still straggling home from the parade. A gang of kids loped by, dancing away from the torpedoes they were firing at one another's feet, and Al said: "They'll kill themselves with those things—throwing them wild like that."

"You were worse than they are," his mother said.

He smiled at her, thinking how strong she looked, the bones of her face so clearly marked under the pale tight skin, her mouth firm, and her eyes blue and deep in their sockets. Her thick gray hair sat like a crown upon her head, and he said idly: "How do you keep your hair, Ma?" pointing ruefully to the thinness of his own, his brows already reaching back into his scalp.

"You don't take after either one of us that way, Albert," she said. "Remember how thick your father's was?"

"Yes, Ma," he said, "I remember."

They sat for a time without speaking. The warm breeze touched their faces lightly, and Emily Schaeffer took a deep breath, half a sigh.

Then Al hitched his chair towards her, and said a little stiffly: "Before they get here—Hilda and Bessie, I mean—I'd like to talk a little business with you, Ma."

She looked surprised. "Business? With me, Albert? I wouldn't—"

"It's not advice, Ma. It's help."

"Is anything wrong, Albert? Business—?"

"Oh, it's all right," he told her. "Good enough." A little sweat appeared high on his brows. "But it could be better. Things have changed since Pa was running the store. I mean times are so good—well, people are just raking in money, but the store's just about keeping to the same old figures." He stopped short.

His mother said impatiently: "For Heaven's sake, what's wrong then? Get on with your story, Albert."

He took a deep breath. "All right, Ma. I'll tell you the whole thing in a few words: I want to expand."

She chuckled.

He looked bewildered for a moment and then, looking down at his wide body filling the chair, smiled weakly. "Not me, the business." The smile left his round face. "I want to take over the store next to ours, you know the place I mean—used to be the Shure-Fit Shoestore. I want to break through the wall and fix it all up—make it modern, and put a new front right across it from the old store. It'll double our floor space—"

"And double your expenses," his mother said.

"Now, Ma," he cried out, "I thought you'd say something like that. But that's not good business. If you don't expand when the time comes, then you're standing still. And first thing you know you're sliding backwards."

"I don't see why," she told him. "Your father did steady business

year in and year out without sliding backwards. I don't see—"

"But, Ma, things aren't like what they were in Pa's day. Times have changed,—new ideas, new methods. Nowadays if you want to stay in business, you got to put up a front, you got to make a big splash with show windows, with advertising, and things like that." His face got flushed. "Don't you see now's the time for me to make something of myself and the store? The country's full of business—look at the way the stock market goes up every day—so why shouldn't Schaeffer's get some of the gravy?"

"But Albert," she said, "it'll mean spending a lot of money on fixing the place up and buying new goods. And you'll want more salespeople. How do you know you'll get enough business to make up for all that?"

"Look, Ma," he told her, "I've been sounding out people on this proposition—big people. I took my problem to Harvey Cantrell, president of the Bank. And you should've heard the way he talked. He said the whole history of the country has been a drive towards the level we're just reaching. All the resources of the country, he says, are just realizing their full power, and everyone with any brains and a little foresight is going to—"

"Yes, Albert," she said, "you don't have to tell me. Made you a regular speech, didn't he? . . . The Bank owns that property you've been talking about, doesn't it?"

He exclaimed in exasperation. "If that isn't just like a woman! Here I been talking to the biggest banker in the city about a business problem and how to solve it, and you think he's trying to rent measly floor-space to me! . . . Why, I was lucky he gave me so much time!"

"I'll bet, though, that the rental was a good deal more than you thought it would be," she said, frowning at him.

He was taken aback. "Well, what if it is? The increased business will more than carry it. Look at the location—right in the middle of the Square. Why, I'd put in a line of men's clothes, kitchenware—"

"You want to make it a department store and carry everything,

Albert? You've had no experience in those lines."

"Well, I'll get it! Gosh, you think of the damndest things to discourage a man."

"You said that a shoestore had already failed in that location."

He looked at her sullenly. "I didn't say it failed."

"Then why did it move out?"

"How do I know, Ma? For any number of reasons."

She was silent.

"For God's sake, Ma, you think of the silliest little things to worry about. It's just not sensible. . . . Everyone I've talked to thinks it's a wonderful idea—except you."

"Well, I'd be satisfied if I were you, Albert," she told him.

"Satisfied—?"

"Yes," she said firmly, nodding her head and rocking gently back and forth, "satisfied. The business has done well for years. Maybe it's old-fashioned to say so, but I think people like the store the way it is. It's kept up in its own way with whatever people've wanted. There's no need for you to expand and start worrying about new lines and big rental and all that, when the store has always paid us a steady income. If Mrs. Mundy was still with you, she'd agree with me."

"Mrs. Mundy!" he said. "She's another cautious one, just like you. Why, I—"

She interrupted him, aware of the mounting exasperation and hurt in his broad flushed face: "Your father was wiser than you think, Albert. Wiser than you ever thought, I guess. I know you haven't liked coming to me for every decision about the use of money in the business. But he didn't fix things that way just so's I could interfere with you, or try to boss you. No, out of the many talks we had before—those few years before—he kept saying: 'I don't want Albert to go money-crazy. I wouldn't want him to have too much. I'd like to have him learn to be satisfied with enough,' he used to say. And I thought he was right."

"Right! Right!" Al burst out. "From the time I could walk, he

was always right. All my life you and he tried to make me think he was right all the time—”

“Albert! That’s not fair of you. That’s not—”

“And just because I never gave in to him,” he said furiously, “he fixed it up so that even after he was gone, he’d have the say over me!”

“No, Albert, no!” she said. “He wanted you to be happy—!”

“Ah!” he said. “If he did, then why won’t you let me do the thing that’ll make me happy?”

“Because,” she told him, “he thought such a thing—money and more money, I mean—wouldn’t make you happy.”

“Well, he couldn’t read the future—how could he know what would make me happy and what wouldn’t?” He swabbed at his face with a crumpled handkerchief. “Believe me, Ma, I loved him. . . . I’m kind of excited right now. . . . But just the same, you know no man’s got a right to tell another man how to live, and what to live for. Those are things that every man has to make up his own mind about. It wasn’t right for him to fix it so that you had to put your name to every money matter in the business.” He said more calmly: “So this is a bigger thing with me than just expanding the business, Ma. It’s the whole principle of how I’m going to live. And I want—” He hesitated.

White-faced, she said in a low voice, already anticipating his answer: “What, Albert? What is it you want?”

“I want to run the business entirely, that’s what,” he said. “Either I’m enough of a man to run it all by myself, or else I’m still a kid running to you and Pa every time I want to do something. That’s the whole thing in a nutshell, Ma.” She was shaken, he could see that. I never thought it was going to come out like this, he thought, already expecting her surrender—poor Ma.

He was stunned when she said: “No, Albert.”

Incredulously, he echoed her: “No?”

“I can’t, Albert.” As he tried to speak, she lifted her hand a little. “Not because your father would not have wanted it. If I

were just blindly doing as he told me to do only because he told me, then I would give in to you. But it goes deeper than that, Albert."

"How could it?" he asked. "How?"

"Because I think he's right, that's why. This is my decision as well as his," she said. "You've got enough money to be happy on. You've been happy enough so far. I wouldn't want you to go crazy for money like so many others."

He said with theatrical bewilderment: "Let me get this straight, Ma. You won't give in, not because you're afraid I'll lose money, but because I'll make some?"

She nodded. "If you want to put it that way—yes."

He looked around the porch as if inviting the attention of invisible spectators to her statement. Still in the same false tone of puzzlement he said: "I never heard of such a thing in all my life!"

"You're hearing it now," his mother said, hoping that he would keep this theatrical attitude, however foolish it seemed to her, rather than plunge bull-like at her again. She felt terribly tired, she wanted to go into the house and lie down, but he had begun to talk again in quite a different tone.

"Look, Ma," he said, "we're getting nowhere fast. I don't want to drag this argument out, seeing you've made your mind up. But you don't understand. A man's work is his life, it's not something separate from him. So I can't let you stop me from what I want to do because it's like stopping me from living as much as I want to live."

"Nonsense!" she said sharply.

"Oh, Ma, it's true; you don't know," he said. He paused as if summoning all his will together, and she, recognizing more strongly in him than ever before the terrible undeviating obstinacy of his father and having felt all through their argument the form if not the matter of many a past argument with Marius, could foretell the final set of his emotions, could sense the hardening of his purpose. She waited, as she had waited so often for Marius, feeling again the same helplessness before the gentle, but steel-hard

resolve, remembering how Marius used to go from plain statement to hot argument until the emotions underneath his reasoning broke through like lava, and ran their course, hardening as they ran, into solid unshakable decision.

She waited, and Albert said gently: "I got no choice, Ma, I have to be free. I can do two things to get what I want: either I can go to a lawyer and see if I got a case so's to give me all the control of the business, or else I can take what money I've got and borrow some more and open the place next door in my own name."

"I suppose so," she murmured vaguely. She was not surprised. When she was younger and Marius had put her through the wringer like this, it had not taken her long to recover and fit herself to his new purpose. But now she had to rest.

"Well, Ma?" said Al.

She pitted herself with, as it seemed, the last of her strength against his oppressive calm. "No," she said.

He let his hands drop off the arms of his chair. "All right," he said, "I'm sorry, Ma."

Looking past him, she saw the car stop at the curb and said: "Here's Hilda and Bess. I . . . I'm going in to lie down a moment, Albert. You tell Hilda the table's set and the roast'll be ready in about twenty minutes. And if the ice cream doesn't come in ten minutes from Sakarian's, you call him up and tell him what's what."

"All right, Ma," he said, and turned towards the pathway as the screen door closed quietly behind her.

HARVEY CANTRELL said: "I won't let you do it, Francis. I can't understand why you should want to."

"Now, Harvey," Francis told him, "there's no sense our going all over that again. It's just as I said: Since I was fourteen, I've been working like a dog. Now I'm tired. I want to rest, want to take it easy for the rest of my life. I want to be free."

Harvey leaned forward over his desk. "But you're just reaching the prime of your life, Francis. Is that a time to quit? Just when you can be most useful to yourself and the community?"

Francis smiled. "And you," he said.

"Yes, to me," Harvey said. "I need you, Francis, you know that. I've leaned on you for a long time for many things." He pushed his squarish tanned face forward at Francis. "But it's been to the advantage of both of us, now, hasn't it? Hasn't it?"

"That's true," Francis said wearily. "But we've been all over this already. What's the use of going over it again?" He looked past Harvey's head out of the window into the Square where the crowd moved and coiled and broke into little rivers streaming out into the streets. "I'm tired, Harvey," he said. "Can't you see I'm not a well man?"

Harvey looked at the other's face, the nostrils pinched, gray, the eyes drawn deep into the skull. "Nonsense," he said briskly. "I admit you don't look so well, but a couple of months at the Lakes would do you a world of good." He paused. "Sure, that's what you need—a good vacation."

Francis wiped his forehead. "It's hot," he said. "I didn't think you'd make such a fuss, Harvey. After all, it isn't as though I was right in your organization working right under you."

"That's just it," Harvey told him. "That's why I can't consent to this foolish idea of yours. You're independent, you're not tied down to me—that's why you've been able to do so much. I've got to have a man like you. That's all there is to it!" He leaned back, smiling.

"You've a smooth tongue, Harvey," Francis said. "You should've been the politician."

Harvey said quickly: "I wasn't trying to flatter you. You know that. I mean every word I say. . . . Now what do you say? Take the vacation. Just drop everything here, and go up and do some fishing, swimming. Try some golf—it's a great game."

Francis sighed. "It's not games I want. It's rest. A complete rest."

"You mean you want to pull a gravestone over yourself," Harvey said sharply.

"That's one way of looking at it," Francis told him.

"Frankly, I can't understand it, Francis. I mean, here it's hardly six months since your new term began, and suddenly you quit. People will wonder."

"The hell with people," Francis said. "I'm sick of people, I've been up to my neck in people all my life. Now I want to live by myself a while." He looked out into the Square again. It was nearly empty now. He saw his car parked close by the reviewing stand and could just make out the patient set of young Tommy's head behind the windshield. He smiled. "This is Independence Day for me, too."

"The country wouldn't have got very far if the men who started it quit just when they were in their prime, Francis."

Francis nodded tiredly. "I know. But I figure I've worked as hard as two or three men, so I can start resting a little sooner."

"Have you thought of this?" Harvey asked. "Have you thought that you'd get tired of resting, that some day you'd want to get back into harness and pull your weight again?"

Francis started to answer, but Harvey went on quickly: "Look at John Cantrell. He retired, didn't he? But he got mighty sick of it I can tell you. And he was a good deal older than you are now when he quit. He got so tired of taking it easy, he jumped at the chance to get back into action when we started the power-plant. Remember? Remember how he took hold? Why, he was on the job all day, wouldn't quit until the last brick was laid and the turbines went in." He tapped the desk. "Francis, he was like a man that's been starved. He couldn't get enough work to satisfy him. It's more than twenty years ago, but it's something I never forgot—the way he took hold again, I mean."

Francis said tiredly: "What's the use of comparing him and me? We're two different men entirely." Now that Harvey had mentioned his father-in-law, he'd be bringing Josie into it next. And he didn't want her name in it. He stirred uneasily. "There's plenty of others you can get besides me, Harvey. You could use this man who used to be in my office, Eddie Mundy. You've met him a few times."

"Don't remember him, don't know him. Don't want to know him," Harvey snapped.

Doesn't he ever get hot or tired? Francis thought, feeling the sticky sweat collecting on his face.

"You're the man I've worked with all these years, and you're the man I want to go on with."

"That's all very nice, Harvey," Francis said. "If there was anything big coming up, why it might be different. But things are so quiet, why—"

"Ah!" Harvey exclaimed, "that's it! That's just it. I've got you now, my boy."

Francis looked at him with mild inquiry.

Harvey leaned forward across the desk again. "I'll tell you what, Francis—I'll make a deal with you. Stay on the job another six months, say till New Year's—that's less than six months—and do the job I want done. Then New Year's day you're a free man. I give you my word."

"I want to be a free man now, Harvey. I don't want to wait any more."

"Don't talk like a child," Harvey said. "Listen—I'll tell you why I need you."

Francis leaned back in his chair. "It better be good," he said. There was young Tommy still waiting patiently for him out in the car, with the sun burning down, too. The poor boy must be roasting, he thought. I'll have to make this quick.

"I want you," Harvey said slowly, "to start that undercover organization for me again."

Francis started up in his chair. "No," he said, his voice rising. "If that's what it is, Harvey, I could never consent to it. Nothing doing, no more of that stuff for me."

Harvey looked at him curiously. "What's the matter with you, Francis? You did it for me once, and a good piece of work it was, too."

"Once was enough," Francis told him. "You forget that old man Schaeffer got killed, that many another man got his head banged

in that piece of business. Oh, no, I wouldn't want to monkey with that again. Plenty of people in this town haven't forgotten it either." He wiped his face.

Harvey said smoothly: "You're losing your grip, Francis."

Connell looked at him. "Listen, Harvey," he said, "if it's all the same to you, don't try to master-mind me."

Harvey laughed. "All right, Francis. My mistake. . . . But listen if you're blaming yourself for Schaeffer's death, you're foolish. . . . That was the government's work, and I tell you privately that it was a good day's work. That man was a dangerous trouble-maker, always was, and you know it."

"Not so dangerous. He was a friend of John's," Francis said.

"We're getting off the subject," Harvey said briskly. "The point is, there's independent union work going on around the Works again. I'm out to stop it, and I need you to help me."

Francis shook his head. He said slowly: "Look, Harvey, why don't you let them go ahead? Your business would be better off in the long run, I bet."

Harvey laughed. "I've heard talk like that before. John Cantrell made me a speech about it once. And I'll tell you what I told him": —Francis saw that the shine of sweat had at last appeared on Harvey's face—"that it's my right as an American citizen to run my business as I like. The men who work for me are paid what I consider fair wages. They've got a Mutual Benefit Association that I organized for them." He paused, then tapped gently on the desk. "But I won't stand for their banding together against me. Against the business. Against themselves. I will not let some leech of a labor politician walk into my office and tell me how to run my business. It's my business, and my privilege to run it as I like in accordance with my rights and the laws of this country."

"Yes," Francis said, "and it's their right, they think, to organize."

"Fine," Harvey said. "Let them organize into anything they want. But if they organize against me, then it's my right to organize against them. They can't interfere with my business and my rights, and I'm not going to let them get started even." He got

up and walked towards Francis. "That's how I stand, Francis. And that's why I need you."

"The times are against you, Harvey," Francis told him.

"The times? The times prove what I'm saying, Francis! . . . Who do you think made the prosperity of this country today? The mob and their unions? No, the businessmen, the leaders and the doers, the administrators and the executives of business, the men who know what's going on and know how to make things keep going on. It's the leadership of the best individuals in the community, not the organizations of the mob." He paused and went on in a quieter tone: "It's not just a question of money. I've got to be free to run my business my own way. That's what it boils down to, Francis. Free to do my share in the city, in the country, by producing what people need, by giving employment to hundreds and hundreds the way my family has always done from the time this city was founded." He smiled. "You see, Francis, it's Independence Day for me too. I can make speeches as well as you. . . . But the point is, I need you to help me run my business as I want to run it. . . . Wait"—he held up his hand as Francis began to speak—"don't give me your answer now. Think it over for a couple of days."

Francis said slowly: "I understand how you feel, Harvey. . . . But I have thought it over. I've been thinking of it for months. Maybe for years, for all you know. And when I came in here, my mind was already made up. You may not like my decision, but I think you ought to respect it. This arguing. . . . Honestly, Harvey, you've worn me out. Look at the sweat dripping off me."

Harvey laughed, and suddenly held out his hand. "All right, then, Francis," he said heartily, "I know when I'm licked. But don't think I've given up hope. Something might happen to make you change your mind. . . . Or maybe I'll think of something."

Francis took his hand. "Maybe," he said smiling, "but I doubt it. . . . I can be as stubborn as you when I have to be." He cleared his throat nervously. "About those stocks, Harvey, I can't tell you how much I appreciate. . . . After all, I'm leaving you flat, and

here you're going to all this trouble, I—"

"Forget it, Francis," Harvey said briskly. "Just put your orders through and watch your money grow. These stocks ought to appreciate fifty percent more by the first of the year." He smiled. "You'll have a tidy little cushion to sit on in your retirement. No one can say when this market'll stop climbing, but I've got every confidence, in spite of the calamity-howlers in the Federal Reserve, that when it stops, it'll be at a good high level. I wouldn't be surprised if you nearly doubled your money in this market."

"It took me a long time to get what I'm putting in," Francis told him. "You don't think there's any danger? . . . After all. . . ."

"I wish you could see how deep I'm in the market myself," Harvey assured him weightily. "I wish I could show you the Bank's investment portfolio. Then you'd really understand my confidence."

"Well, Harvey, if I should lose the money, I'll have to cut my throat, or else come back to work again." He paused at the door.

Harvey laughed. "Well, I hope you lose it then! . . . But seriously, Francis, you can't lose—not with the blue chips I've picked out for you."

"That's fine," Francis said. "Fine!" He opened the door. "I'll be in soon to tie up some loose ends."

Harvey waved. "Whenever you're ready, Francis."

When he got into the car, Tommy said: "Gee, I thought you'd never come, Father."

"It was a little hard getting away," Francis said. As he turned the car into the Square, he was thinking how quiet it was. Far away an occasional firecracker popped, and a streetcar trundled by, but there were scarcely any people on the streets and only an occasional car hurrying belatedly towards the country. He reflected that his dropping out of sight would leave scarcely a ripple on the deep quiet tide of the town. But now that it was over, he felt fine, he assured himself.

And now he had to tell Josie. But when? And then he felt that it would be sweet to take her up to the Park at night to see the fire-

works, to sit on a bench away from the crowds, as they had when he proposed to her years ago, and in the deep soft evening, lighted by the brief flashing radiance of the fireworks, prove his love because he had given up his work, his freedom for her, to ease her heart and his of all the pain of all the years so that the wall between them would crumble away forever and they would be close to each other again as they had been in the first years of their marriage. It would be like a remarriage, a second honeymoon. Maybe the two of them would go off together for a little while. Up to the Lakes maybe. Delia could take care of young Tommy and his grandfather without any trouble. And Josie and he . . .

"What are you dreaming about, Father?" Tommy asked him.

Francis turned the car into their street. "Just thinking about lunch and the ballgame we'll see at the Park this afternoon, sonny," he said. "That's all . . ."

WHEN Amby Tait saw a flurry of arms and heard a subdued grunting from under the clump of trees just off the path, he turned off to see what was up, and found a couple of fourteen-year-olds going at it hot and heavy with their fists. They paid no attention to him at all when he said: "What's goin' on? Cut it out!" One of the kids was bleeding from the nose, and every once in a while would wipe ineffectually at the drip of blood with the back of one fist while he continued to flail away with the other. Amby let them go at it a minute more, and then stepped in and pulled them apart. "Cut it out," he told them; "this is a fine way to be celebratin' the Fourth. . . . Whyn't you go up to see the ballgame instead of sockin' each other?" After a minute, they stopped struggling against his grip, and stood glaring at each other. He thought he recognized one of them, the stocky one, and said to him: "Are you Barney Hanagan's boy? . . . You oughta know better."

"He started it," young Hanagan said. He kept looking at Amby curiously.

The other pulled the handkerchief away from his bloody nose. "You're a stinkin' liar!" he said.

Young Hanagan lunged forward, and his enemy threw up his fists again.

Amby gave them both a shake. "I told you to cut it out," he said. He remembered suddenly that one day in the spring his seven-year-old Mike had come home from school bawling, and saying that Paulie Hanagan had been picking on him. This must be the very kid, he thought. "You must think you're quite a pug," he said to the boy.

Paulie Hanagan with a fresh look on his face said: "I get along," and Amby felt like smacking him one.

"Well," he said, "wipe that tough look off your face and shake hands with this guy. You've had enough fightin' for one day."

"Why should I?" young Hanagan said. "Why should I?"

"Yeah," said the other, "you can't make us."

"If I drag you up to your old man," Amby said to Paulie, "you'll know what's what." The other kid was all right, talking tough, but not meaning it. This one, this Hanagan, looking Amby over in a calculating way as if wondering whether he could take a punch at him, too, was as tough a little punk as he had seen in a long time.

He tightened his grip on the boy's arm, and young Paul said: "Hey, cut it out! You're hurtin' me!"

"Will you shake hands with him?" Amby said.

"Okay, okay! I will." He stuck out his hand, and after the proper moment of hesitation the other kid took it.

Amby released them, and at once they drew off together. Young Hanagan began talking fast to the other in an undertone, and as he talked, both quickened their pace away from Amby. He looked after them in some surprise and then called out: "Remember now—no more fightin'."

Paulie Hanagan wheeled around, and blurted at Amby with his lips.

If it was my kid, I'd murder him, Amby thought, and turned towards the path again. He heard a shout behind him, and looked back at the boys. Paulie shouted something again, but Amby could not catch what he said. He felt uneasy because other people, hurry-

ing by to the ballgame and the Iron Works picnic, were looking curiously at him and the kids, and after a moment he made a vague threatening gesture with his hand at the boys, and started forward again.

The boys yelled again, and this time he heard the words clearly in a high mocking chant: "Stool pigeon! Squealer! Stool pigeon! Stool pigeon!"

He stood stock-still in the path as if he had been suddenly clubbed and this were the moment before falling. All at once such a rage burned in his body that his lips drew back from his teeth and he choked with the desire to feel crushed between his hands the face of the little son of a bitch of a bastard, not realizing that he was muttering the words between his bared teeth. Then shame struck him as he saw people staring at him and then back at the boys, and in the next moment he thought, almost as if he were explaining to them: He's saying it because I stopped them from fighting and said I'd tell his old man on him. That's all, that's what it is, that's why he's saying it. If it was my kid, I'd murder him!

"Stool pigeon! Stool pigeon! Stool pigeon!"

A couple of men had stopped. "What's up, buddy? What's the matter?" one of them asked, looking at Amby's pale face with eager curiosity.

"Nothin'," he said. "A couple of fresh kids, that's all."

"Stool pigeon! Dirty stool pigeon! Stool pigeon!"

"They were havin' a fight, and I stopped 'em and told 'em I'd tell their old man. That's all," he said almost breathlessly, his eyes darting restlessly at them. "I'm a World War veteran," he said next, as if somehow he was absolving himself before them, asking for their pity that a man who had served his country in the trenches should be submitted to this indignity on the country's birthday.

One of the men laughed. "Outa the trenches by Christmas, buddy! Why don'cha throw a bomb at 'em?"

The other laughed, and Amby snarled: "Push off, wise guy!"

"Yeah?" said the first one, but when Amby stepped towards them with the grimace of his murderous rage plain upon his face,

both walked quickly away up the path towards the ballpark without looking back.

"Stool pigeon! Stool pigeon! Dirty stool pigeon!"

He stood with his head hanging a little forward, sweat tickling his scalp and running down his body, thinking: Not because I found out about the meeting and told Mundy, and Al Schaeffer's old man got killed, and Al not speaking to me all these years, hating me like poison, and nearly turning in my friend Louie Davis. Not because of that. They wouldn't know. Kids wouldn't know about that . . . unless they heard their fathers and mothers talking. But so long ago. Nine years ago. Who'd remember that? Who . . . ?

"Stool pigeon! Dirty stool pigeon! Stool pigeon! . . ."

He turned slowly, as if pushed, and without raising his head began to walk steadily back towards the boys, until he realized that the yelling had stopped. When he looked up the path again, they were gone. "I was just goin' to ask them what they meant, that's all," he said aloud. "I want to know. I thought I'd make sure."

A woman's voice said loudly: ". . . drunk!" and then he came to and pulled himself together, going quickly around the turn of the path and sitting down on a bench. He swabbed his face with his handkerchief. He felt wrung out, but jerked to his feet when he heard some yelling again. This time, though, it was just a bunch of young kids swarming up the slope of the hill towards the baseball field. I'm in a daze, he thought, I got to meet Marian and the kids, and started walking slowly up the path, thinking: Nine, nearly ten years! That's a long time. Who'd remember all that time? . . .

When he came up to Marian and little Peg, she exclaimed: "Amby! You all right?"

"Sure, I'm fine," he said. "Whaddya mean, am I all right?"

"You look so pale," she said.

"It's hot, climbin' that hill," he told her. "Where's Mike?" She nodded over at the drinking fountain where a cluster of kids were waiting their turns.

"I'll get him," he said. "The picnic'll be startin' soon."

"I thought we weren't goin'," she said. "You said—you know, about its bein' that union crowd."

"It's public, ain't it?" he said. "They're sellin' tickets. I thought Mike might like it better than the ballgame." He went towards the fountain.

"Lo, Pa," young Mike said. He squirted water from the gap in his front teeth. Amby told him to come on: his mother and little sister were waiting for him. But instead of going back to Marian, he led the boy towards the refreshment stand and bought him an ice cream cone. Coming back, with the ice cream already dripping down on the boy's hand, Amby asked casually: "Say, Mike, remember when you came home bawlin' from school last year?"

Mike, licking at the edges of the cone, shook his head. "Nope," he said.

"Yes, you do—now try an' remember. You said the Hanagan kid pushed you down in the schoolyard. Why'd he do it?"

Mike hunched his shoulders. "I dunno," he said. He was trying to spread his tongue over the whole surface of the ice cream.

"Well, you bawled loud enough," Amby said. "You oughta remember somethin'."

"He was callin' me names, and then he pushed me when I called him some back," Mike said suddenly.

Amby's eyes darted down at his son. "What'd he say? What'd he call you?"

Mike said: "You gonna give 'im a sock in the puss, Pa? Are you, huh?"

"No, no," Amby told him, "I just wanna know what names he called you, that's all."

"I dunno. . . . Say, Pa, will ya buy me some orangeade now? Will ya, Pa?"

Amby wanted to slap the kid, but he said: "Never mind . . . I'll buy you a drink later. C'mon, your mother and Peggy're waitin'."

He thought he'd calm down when the ballgame started, but he hardly knew whether the game had begun or not because his mem-

ory kept searching back, struggling blindly against his will not to look back and see again old man Schaeffer's head on the floor and Louie Davis's face when he came out to him at Dave Bandler's office. Yes, many a time, though it was nearly ten years now, many a time while he was shaving maybe, or leaning over the lathe, or having a beer, or eating supper, or listening to Amos and Andy on the radio, or watching a ballgame, many a time suddenly the memory of New Year's Day nine years ago crawled in the bottom of his mind like a blind snake, so that his fingers shook on the gear chuck, the food in his mouth tasted like brass, the music of the radio jangled in his ears until at last the snake slid back into its fetid hole, leaving its wet track to beslime the rest of the day. He thought sometimes it was like having D.T.'s, and he shrank away from a terrifying image of a blind snake with lidless puckered eyeholes curled on the bottom of his skull, its narrow head lifting and searching the way the snakes in the park zoo did.

"I'm goin' nuts," he muttered to himself, "I gotta do somethin'."

He started when Marian said: "F'r Heaven's sake, Amby, this is the fourth time I've ast you . . ."

"What? What?" he stammered.

"I said," she told him with exaggerated slowness, "have you made up your mind what we're gonna do? First you say we'll go to the ballgame, then you say we won't, that we'll go to the picnic, then you say to the ballgame—honest, Amby, I think you got too much sun."

Mike was tugging at his hand. "I wanna go to the picnic, Pa. I wanna go," and Peggy piped up: "Me too. Me too."

"I been thinkin'," Amby said.

"Well," Marian told him, "if it makes you this dizzy to think—"

"Look," he said abruptly, "you just wait here for me, willya, Marian? There's a guy I have to see around here. No kiddin'!"

"I've heard that one before," she answered, but looking at his pale face and restless eyes, added quickly: "What's the matter? Amby? Somethin' is worryin' you. A blind man could see that." She saw him shiver. "I think you're not feelin' well. Maybe you're

gonna have one of your spells. . . . You better come home and lay down. . . . C'mon!" she said anxiously, and saw that he had not been listening. "Amby! Did you hear me?"

"Huh? What?" he said. "Yeah, take the kids home. . . . There's a guy I gotta see."

Suddenly she seized his arm. "Amby, you ain't lost your job?"

"Nah, don't be foolish," he said. "I just gotta see this guy for a little while. It's—it's shop business. I gotta see him now." Then without waiting for her reply, he turned and began to walk slowly towards the picnic grounds.

"Amby!" she called after him, but he did not turn around, and though she wanted to run after him, she restrained herself while Mike pulled at her hand and whined: "I wanna go to the picnic with Pa. I wanna go. . . ."

Amby was surprised to see so many people on the picnic grounds. The women, most of them, were sitting under the trees, fanning themselves languidly with paper fans and slapping away at the gnats while they talked, and calling out once in a while to their kids who were running around and having a good time in spite of the heat. Most of the men were over at the field watching the races, and Amby heard a burst of yelling as he walked slowly, with lowered head, along the sidelines. He stopped finally and watched the races for a little while.

When the potato-sack race was over, he asked the man standing next to him where he could find Barney Hanagan. Over at the judge's stand, the man told him, and Amby eased his way through the crowd until he was standing just below Barney. He watched Barney's sweaty red face until Hanagan feeling his look, glanced down at him, stared a second, and then instantly turned away.

Amby felt sick, but he waited until he caught Hanagan's eye again and said, with his mouth gone dry and bitter: "Listen, Barney, could I talk to you a minute? . . . It's very important."

The crowd was yelling at the runners, and Amby had to repeat his words while Hanagan leaning over the railing of the stand, cupped his ear. "Now?" he asked. "Right away?"

Amby nodded, and Hanagan told him that he'd be finished in a couple of minutes and would Amby wait. Amby said that he would, and turned around to watch the races. He saw a boy looking at him and recognized Paulie Hanagan. The kid slipped back at once into the crowd, and Amby suddenly felt defenseless, thinking: If he should get a whole gang of them now to yell at me? He walked back behind the stand, and after a little while saw the boy standing some distance off, still watching him.

Then Barney tapped him on the shoulder, and said: "What'd you want to see me about?" and he felt his stomach leap.

He asked Barney to walk off a little way with him, and they sat down finally at one of the small picnic tables, sticky with crumbs and little puddles of soda pop. He said: "I'm sorry . . . I know it's a busy day for you, Barney,—” He faltered to a stop.

"Yeah," Hanagan said. "Just tell me what you want here," and waited.

Amby blurted: "Listen, Barney, I wanna join the union."

The other sat back and stared at him. Then he said: "Jesus! You got a hell of a nerve!"

Amby wet his lips, his eyes darted at Hanagan and away again. "Gimme a break," he said. "Whaddya say, Barney?"

"I got nothin' to say to you," Hanagan leaned forward. "The boys remember you and your crowd." He laughed harshly. "I remember, too."

"I know," Amby said dully. "For Christ's sake, though, will y'listen to me?"

"No," Hanagan said. "Now screw out of here before you get thrown out." His voice thickened. "You Judas, do you want to turn us in again? Do you want to get us all jammed into that detention pen again as if we was filthy cattle? Do you? So you can c'ollect blood money? Without food and water for more than a day, the forty of us packed in together so's a man couldn't even lay down?"

"It was a mistake," Amby mumbled, shrinking away from the slow uncoiling of the snake in his skull.

Hanagan laughed again. "A mistake, he says!"

Amby lifted his sweating face. "Gimme a break. Gimme a chance, Barney. I didn't know what I was doin'. I didn't know it was you and the other guys. It wasn't my fault." He mumbled: "We was starvin', me an' my old lady. . . ."

"Better if you'd starved to death, you Judas!"

"It was right after the war," Amby said in a hoarse monotone. "I got gassed. Look, I lost all my hair,"—he took his straw hat off and put it on the table—"I don't think I was right in the head. I was terribly sick at the base hospital in Brest . . . it's a wonder I'm alive today." He wiped his sweaty lips with the back of his hand. "Gimme a break, Barney! I'll swear on the altar at St. Joseph's!" He stopped short, and his voice dropped. "All these years it was like a snake was crawlin' inside my head."

"Snake? You're a murderer," Hanagan said. "You killed old man Schaeffer. He was a saint. . . . I wouldn't trust you far as I could throw you. . . . Who sent you here? Who told you to try to join this union? Who's payin' your blood money now?"

"All these years, who'd remember? I never thought. . . ." Amby's voice trailed away. He seemed not to have heard a word Hanagan said. He began his monotone again. "I was kind of out of my head. I was gassed. I lost all my hair. I'm a World War veteran, you know."

Hanagan drew back a little. "You're outa your head now," he said, "if you think we'll take you."

"I was gassed y'know," the monotone went on, "I lost all my hair. I was in the trenches in France. I—"

"Better if you'd been killed," Hanagan said. "That's all I gotta say." Abruptly he stood up.

"Barney! I wanna prove to you. . . . Gimme a break! I—" but then his voice faltered to a stop as he watched Hanagan's round back going away. He sat with his head bowed on his chest, not even moving when a boy's voice from a little distance said: "Hey, stool pigeon! Stool pigeon!"

"IF ANYBODY sees me here with you. . . ." She shivered. "He'd kill me. He's mean enough now."

"Jes's, Lily, will you quit whinin' about it? I told you I'd see you in a coupla days, but you hadda make it today. And I want you to quit callin' me at the hotel. All the guys there are ribbin' me about it."

"Well, I can't help it," Lily told him. "It's your fault. If you'd only get to see me once in a while. . . ."

"Sure!" Smitty said. "That'd be swell! Come to see you in your front parlor and have the Turk put a knife in me!"

"You could call me up once in a while just the same," she said.

"Ah, it's too risky," he told her. How could he shake her, Smitty was thinking, shake her for good? She was a swell-looking broad once, but nobody'd look at her twice now—fat and sloppy. Just a big peroxide blonde. You could get them a dime a dozen anywhere.

"Well, you didn't hafta make me meet you in the park," she said. "It's even more risky here." She looked down at the stragglers on the path below.

"Nah," he assured her, "don't worry. . . . This is the best place and the best time. Everybody's up to the ballgame, or the picnic."

"You got a car," she said, "we could've gone out to a tavern somewhere."

"Where's your brains, Lily? Anybody from town in one of those places might see us, and then where would you be? Right out on the street on your tail."

"All right," she said. Her voice rose. "I don't care, see? Let them see us."

"Lily, are you nuts?" He looked a little fearfully at her full rouged mouth, the lips pulled tight.

"What if they do see us?" she said. "I'm sick 'n' tired of all this sneakin' around, shiverin' what might happen. . . . If you want to know, there's plenty of talk about us a'ready. It's just luck that

Paul's so busy in the store, that he don't know about us. But he's got friends, and one of these days, one of them'll get up enough nerve to tell him."

"Ah, you're kiddin'," he told her. But he looked around uneasily.

"I'll leave 'im, I'll get a divorce," she said flatly. "That'll settle the whole business. An' we'll get married."

He was panic-stricken. "He'd kill you," he said. "You don't know what these Turks are like when they're mad. They ain't human. He'd cut your throat with a razor."

"Listen," she said, "don't give me that crap."

"Now you're talkin' like a tramp," he told her.

"An' who made me a tramp?" she said hysterically. "Who's been makin' me promises all these years? All about takin' me out of this one-horse town, takin' me to Chicago, to New York, givin' me a taste of real life. All these years! And still you keep on talkin' big to me, and doin' nothin'." Her voice broke. "I'm not a young girl any more, Jack. . . . You gotta do somethin'. You're all I got."

"Now don't bawl," he said, "everything'll be all right soon. In a little while now, we'll be doin' all the things I been tellin' you."

"You're not young any more either," she said unexpectedly. "You must be all of forty-five, forty-six. It's time you was settlin' down, too, instead of hangin' around that cheap athaletic club all the time and those speakeasies with that tough crowd."

"Forty-two!" he lied indignantly.

"Well, you look more," she said, "no matter how fancy you dress."

He looked down with complacence at his round paunch and smoothed his thin hair back. "How about yourself?" he said. "You could do with a little fixin' up, too."

She rounded upon him. "Not while I'm eatin' my heart out! All these years waitin' for you to do somethin'. Like pullin' teeth to get any money out of Paul for a new dress. And how long since you gave me a present? After all I done for you, too, when

you were up against it. You never even paid back the money I took for you!"

"Listen, baby," he said, "forget it, you're still the only one for me. . . . I'm gonna do plenty for you, you'll see."

"When?" she said, "when?—that's what I wanta know. . . . I got to know before I go crazy! What a fool I was to ever get tied up with two slobs like you! I could've had my pick when I was a girl. There was plenty of fellers crazy about me, and you know it."

"Sure, sure," he said soothingly, "and I'm still crazy about you, Lily."

"Well, you gotta do somethin', that's all there is to it. Before I go crazy."

"Okay," he said, "okay. We can't stay here all day. Whaddya want me to do?" He put his arms across her plump back and pulled her towards him. Some armful! he thought, his mind scurrying for an excuse to get away from her.

She said in a different voice: "I don't know why I'm still crazy about you, Jack, the way you treated me all these years."

"Things're gonna be swell for us, you'll see," he told her.

The first cool breeze of late afternoon blew over them.

"When?" she insisted. "When?"

"Soon," he said.

She pulled angrily away from his arm. "We're right back where we started then. But if you don't make me a promise right now, if you don't name the time, the day, then you know what I'll do?"

Uneasily he faced her. "Now, Lil, don't do nothin' foolish."

"I'll tell Paul," she said. "I'll tell him everything!"

"No, you can't do that, Lily! Jes's, you'd wreck everything. . . . We could get pulled in. He'd murder you and me both."

"Then let's run away," she said. "Then he'd divorce me. For desertion. I read all about it in *True Confessions*. He'll divorce me, then we'll get married. . . . It's lucky I haven't got any kids. This woman in *True Confessions*, in the story, I mean, she even left her kids, she loved this man so much. . . ."

He said swiftly: "Promise me you won't say anything to him, Lily."

"I won't promise a thing, unless you promise me first. Unless you name the day. And it has to be soon—a week!—or I'll tell Paul."

He shrugged, and put his arm around her again. "Okay, baby, you win," he told her. "But it can't be a week—we gotta wait a while."

"You're just stallin'," she told him. "Again!"

"Listen, don't be foolish," he said; "we have to have some dough, don't we?"

"Oh! you want me to get the money too? Is that it? You're a fine one, you are!"

"Now wait, Lily," he said with dignity; "you don't have to talk that way to me. Just because you helped me out a few times. . . ."

"You got money," she said. "I know you have. You make plenty outa that nigger fighter. An' you got two more fighters besides. An' you got a car an' swell clothes—so don't tell me you ain't got any money."

"I can't go around in rags, c'n I?" he said. "How c'n I talk to p'moters, how c'n I get fights if I don't look decent, if I'm not dressed respectable?"

"More excuses," she said bitterly. "I'll tell Paul, you'll see. I'll tell him tonight, I'll tell him as soon as I get home."

"Jes's, can't you wait till I finish, Lily? You don't have to high-pressure me. . . . Listen, I'm short of dough right now because I'm in the stock market in a big way. I'm gonna make thousands!"

"You're kiddin'," she said sullenly.

"Oh, yeah? Then how about this." He pulled his wallet out and took a paper from it. "It's a letter from my broker. Look what it says." He unfolded the broker's confirmation of his order and laid it on her lap. "Go on, read it," he told her. "You'll see if I'm kiddin' or not."

She read slowly: "We have this day bought on margin for

your account and risk 60 shares of United Corporation. . . . \$2658.72. . . .’”

“Y’see?” he exulted when she handed the letter back to him. “I’m out for the big dough. I been a sucker all my life not to’ve played the market sooner. That’s how the big shots make their dough. Buyin’ and sellin’ in the market. I’m playin’ right along with the big shots. Say, I got a profit now if I wanted to cash in. But why should I? This market’s gonna hit the sky before it stops, and I’m ridin’ right along with it.” His eyes glittered upon her, and his breathing quickened. “That’s why I been holdin’ off, Lily. I’m just waitin’ to cash in big. An’ when I do, then you an’ me’ll be free an’ independent. We’ll hit the high spots. We’ll get outa this town so fast, they won’t even see our smoke.”

“Yeah,” she said, “but how about your fighters? You gonna take them with us?”

“The hell with ’em!” he told her. “That stinkin’ nigger c’n rot for all of me. The black bastard, I’d like to cut his heart out before we leave.”

“When do we?” she said.

“Now, Lily—”

“When?” she repeated, her mouth thrust forward in petulant demand.

“Jes’s, Lily, I been tellin’ you, it depends on the market.”

“You c’n be in the market in other cities, too. It’s right in New York, ain’t it?”

“Sure,” he said, “sure. But I got to put on a few more fights first. I gotta get some more dough to put up for stocks. A few more months till I line up some bouts for the nigger.”

“All right,” she said, “a few more months. Christmas. I’ll wait till then.”

“Christmas—that’s only five, six months. . . . Lily, you—”

“Then I’ll tell Paul, I’ll tell the cops. I’ll tell the whole world,” she said desperately.

“Okay, Lil, you win,” he told her quickly. “Christmas, you an’ me blow outa this burg for good.”

She turned towards him. "You promise?" she asked, pushing back the heavy brassy hair from her ears. "Swear!" she added dramatically.

"I swear. May I drop dead, Lily!" he said loudly.

She leaned forward upon him, and he clasped her, kissing her heavily.

At length she drew away. "There!" she said. "That's what you'll get all the time when we're together for good."

"Jes's, Lily, you're wonderful! I'm burnin' for you."

He tried to embrace her again, but she slid away on the bench. "Not now, Jack. . . . Someone might see. . . . Besides I gotta go. I'm late now and I'll hafta answer a million questions." She arose and patted her hair.

"Wait, Lily," he said hoarsely. He took her arm and hugged it close to his body, "I'll drive you downtown."

"All right," she said, "but you better leave me off a block above the store."

"Sure, baby," he said, "anything you say. I'm nuts about you. . . . Nuts!"

The sun was going down the sky, shining into his eyes as, after dropping Lily off, he continued downtown on his way to the Flats where Indie Whipple lived. He sat negligently at the wheel, his head cocked back a little so that the smoke of his cigarette would not curl back into his face. She still had hot pants, he was thinking, but there were plenty others—younger ones who didn't ask so much and didn't expect so much. Good old Lily, a good kid just the same. But run away with her? Nuts! No broad was going to hang herself around his neck. "Love 'em and leave 'em, that's your motto, Jack. You got to be free." But just the same, he would have to blow out of town. He'd blow before Christmas, and take the nigger with him. He grinned. He'd be eloping with the nigger instead of Lily. She'd get over it, the good-natured slob. He hummed to himself: "'All alone by the telephone, all alone and feeling blue.'"

She'd get over it. Maybe he would send her a present—a watch

or something while he was traveling around the country. Yup, he'd have to blow, or the first thing he knew he'd be in the jug, with the Turk screaming bloody murder all over town. But plenty of time yet till Christmas. He'd get a setup for the nigger for Labor Day—bring in some stumble-bum from out of town and get him a big play in the paper, build him up so there'd be plenty of betting money around. If he could get the short end, or better yet, if the nigger was an odds-on favorite and he could make him take a dive, Jesus, he could clean up on the bets alone, never mind the purse. Then maybe Armistice Day another fight. And after that he'd blow. . . .

Of course, the nigger had slowed up, but he still looked good. He still stripped beautiful. The customers went wild when they saw his black shiny body with the muscles sliding under the skin, shining under the ring lights. Easy to get him some bouts in the big-time instead of working him in this jerk circuit. They'd cut him to ribbons in the big-time clubs. But not before he had cleaned up on him. Then the black bastard could go to hell for all of him. . . . The big thing was to get the nigger bastard to leave town with him before Christmas.

He slowed up as he came into the dusty streets of the Flats, and cursed the kids who darted back and forth in front of the car while the firecrackers popped and chattered. "The heavy money—just get your hands on it, Jack," he said to himself. "Then you're free, free of everything—Lily, the nigger, everybody. Just let the market ride and ride, and you're free and independent—swell clothes, swell booze, swell chow, swell women. A great life, a great country. Jesus! Let the market ride!" It was dark in the tenement hallway in spite of the wash of sunlight on the street and he ascended cautiously.

When Indie let him in, he said: "Jes's, Frankie, why don't y'move into a decent place instead of livin' in this dump? You got the dough."

"This place is good enough for me," Indie said. "What you want?"

"Jes's, Frankie, you always talk to me as if I was some tramp askin' for a handout, instead of your manager. Gimme a chance to catch my breath. . . . I gotta swell proposition." He looked around. "Say, where's your ol' lady? I ain't seen her around in a long time?"

"She's gone away," Indie said. "She's gone somewhere with my father, that's all I know. I did everything for her, but she's gone." With heavy undiminished bitterness he remembered coming home to find her note pinned on the kitchen table.

"Is 'at a fact?" Jack said. "Well, don't take it hard, Frankie. It's on'y natural a woman wants t'live with her husband. You'd be better off if you was t'settle down with some nice babe, too." It was the opening he was looking for. "Maybe the kind you want don't live in this town, Frankie. But in—well in Chicago, New York, you could take your pick. You—"

"Shut up!" Indie said. "I don't like that talk. . . . Just tell me what you want." He turned his face towards the window, and the light struck hard against his cheekbones. "What's this proposition?"

"You don't have to get sore, Frankie." Smitty took a step towards him. "I came right down to see you soon's I got this idea, Frankie. I don't let no grass grow under my feet. . . . I'm sittin' up in the park, and all of a sudden it comes to me: 'Why should Frankie and me hang around this one-horse town workin' for chicken-feed when we could get two, three times as much workin' the big towns—Pittsburgh, or New York, Philly, Chicago?' . . . Y'know what they say, Frankie—to make money, you gotta go where the money is. Whaddya say?"

He waited eagerly for the answer, but Indie's expression did not change.

Jack insisted: "Whaddya say, Frankie boy? We'll blow outa here before Christmas. I'll getcha a couple of fights before then—Labor Day, Armistice Day—for travelin' expenses, and then we'll go out on the big-time and make some real heavy money!"

"I did good enough around here," Indie said slowly. He looked

at Smitty. "Anyway, I'm goin' to quit fightin'."

Jack pawed at his arm. "What? What you say, Frankie?"

"You heard me," Indie told him. "You better git another meal-ticket."

"You're kiddin', Frankie! You can't pull this on me after all I done for you!" A thin spray of spit came from Smitty's swiftly moving mouth. "Why I made you, I worked for you, I went without eatin' to pay our expenses, I fought p'moters all over the state to get bouts for you—you're not gonna throw me down now!" Loudly he said: "We got a contract, and I'll have you up in court! You—"

Indie said: "You take me to court, and I'll beat you for blood. I'll beat you till you die."

"Well, never mind me—think of y'self! Think of the easy money you're passin' up! Y' must be crazy—why, I thought y'was so crazy for money, you'd die fightin' for it."

"I got enough money," Indie said, "so I had enough fightin'. I'm quittin'."

"Listen, Frankie, for God's sake, think it over a while. . . . Why, if we went out on the big-time and let some big p'moters look you over, maybe y'could be champ. Y'could make more money than y'vever saw in your life, you'd be on top of the world. . . . The crowds'd foller you in the streets—Frankie Whipple, the Black Tiger, Heavyweight Champeen of the World. Don't that mean nothin' to you?"

"No," Indie said, "I got enough. I paid enough for what I got. It's time for me to stop."

"It never cost you a thing!" Jack said. "I paid every nickel of the expenses!"

"Sure," Indie said, "sure you did. . . . And who paid for these?" He turned his head towards Jack and pointed to one flattened, misshapen ear and then the other. "An' for these?" His hand brushed the scars around his eyes. "Who paid for these?" he asked, showing his swollen crooked knuckles. "An' these?" He put his fingers to his mouth and took out the bridge of front

teeth. He waited, but Jack did not say anything. "I paid," he said. "I paid enough. But no more. I'm done payin'."

"Yeah? And what you gonna live on? Fresh air?"

Indie laughed. "Don't worry about me, boy. I been workin' hard since I was fourteen. I never spent any money I didn't have to. I lived in this dump to save money. I didn't care so long's the money went steady into the bank. . . . And now I got enough." He got up abruptly to stand over Smitty. "An' it's like I said: you make any trouble about a contract, an' I'll kill you, Mister Manager."

Jack shrank down in the chair. "That's no way to talk to me, Frankie, after all I done for you. If you made up your mind to quit, I wouldn't try to stop you—no, not for a million bucks. I wish you all the luck in the world, Frankie boy." He straightened up in the chair, and fumbled at the knot in his tie. "Nosir, Frankie, not for a million bucks, but—well, the on'y thing I wanted to ask you—will y'take these two fights for Labor Day and Armistice Day? We always draw good money them days. You could put maybe two grand away in the bank for two fights. You could use two grand more, huh, Frankie? What say? With some bets on the side, y'could clean up on two fights. Whaddya say, Frankie?"

"Okay," Indie said slowly. "Okay. For that money, I will."

"That's the talk, Frankie, that's the spirit, Frankie boy—we'll clean up, you'll see." He got up and went to the door, anxious to get away before the black bastard changed his mind. "I'll be aroun' to let y'know about signin' the papers. . . . So long, Frankie. So long, Frankie boy. . . ."

Going down the dark stairs, he ground his teeth together, thinking he'd get somebody good to fight the nigger, somebody who'd cut him to ribbons. He'd show him how to talk to a white man. Or maybe he'd get three or four gorillas to give the black bastard a good going-over—get him down on the floor and put the boots to him, break all his ribs, smash his nose, cave in his skull. In the dimness as he groped down the stairs, the fantasy swelled and

grew until at last he saw himself alone standing over the nigger crumpled on the floor, slowly and carefully kicking the black face in, feeling his boot thudding against the smashed mouth till the teeth spilled on the floor. When he got out into the street, he sighed with satisfaction, and driving back uptown, he said to himself: "Okay. That settles it, Smitty. . . . The day after Armistice Day, you blow outa this burg for good. Alone. No fat Lily, no black nigger. . . . You for the big-time, Jack. You'll get a stable of big-time fighters . . . you'll be another Tex Rickard," promising himself he'd be free, taking no guff from anyone, promising himself a mahogany office, promising himself a twelve-cylinder Cadillac, promising himself a beautiful broad for every night in the week, promising himself big steaks and smooth liquor, promising himself everything that tasted good, smelled good, sounded good, felt good, looked good, promising himself everything that a kick full of money could buy, promising himself the easiest life on the best street in the biggest city in the richest country in the world where the stock market went up and up and up till it landed a guy in Heaven, a free and independent American collecting on the country's promises, promising and promising. . . . "It's all settled then," he said to himself, pushing fat Lily and the black nigger out of his mind, while he parked the car in front of the Rivoli Hotel. It had been some exciting day, he didn't even have a chance to celebrate the Fourth the way he used to. And he decided to call up some of the boys, get a few bottles of booze, have some sandwiches sent up, and have a nice crapgame. Make a little whoopee to celebrate the Fourth of July. . . .

JOHN CANTRELL was supposed to rest every afternoon for a couple of hours at least, but today he was restless and could not doze off. Lying upon the bed, he stared up at the ceiling where the late afternoon sun flashed occasionally past the flapping shade. Just the same, he was thinking, in spite of what she had said, Josie was afraid for young Tommy. It must've been in her mind from the time the boy began to grow up. But she would never give in,

he told himself, restlessly turning his head upon the pillow. It was up to Francis then. But what she wanted of him was asking too much of any man. No, he couldn't blame Francis either.

So it would have to be as Josie said—when the boy found out, he would have to stand up to it. And maybe it wouldn't matter after all. Maybe the boy would just accept it and make the best of it with them. But if he didn't, if he couldn't—ah, well, it would be shameful that he should have to suffer under a burden that was not of his own making.

Too bad, too bad, he told himself, sitting up on the bed and swinging his legs carefully to the floor. Cautiously he went to the window, raised the shade a few inches, and crouching a little, pecked down into the backyard. Josie was sitting in a garden chair under the maples with a magazine on her lap. He smiled to himself, and turning from the window, did not go back to his bed, but to his desk.

Quietly he pulled open the deep bottom drawer and drew from it his manuscript history. It was heavy in his hand, and it gave him a feeling of peace simply to hold its weight. I better hurry up and finish it, he thought, because one of these days pretty soon I won't be here to finish it. And he wanted to finish it, not just leave it hanging in the air. But if the life of the city was not over yet, how could he put an end to it on paper? He ought to bring it all the way up to date, maybe be writing it the very last second of his life. In the meantime. . . . He picked up his reading spectacles, and settled them on the thin bridge of his nose. Then he leafed idly through the pages, and at length began to read.

As always when he read in his own history of the city's past, it eased his mind, for it seemed to him that he was living his life over again, his own words evoking all the feelings, the sights and the sounds of the city long ago, so that he fell away from the present, forgot Josie and Francis, his fears for young Tommy, his grief for Marius, forgot the weakness of his heart, and sank slowly down into the brooding warmth of his memories. Even while he had read the old newspapers, their paper still creamy white and

soft to the touch, and while he had rummaged through the journals and pamphlets of the Historical Society, the light impalpable dust that rose from the paper had tingled in his nostrils like a drug, so that as he read, he dreamed, and the hand that took notes seemed to move of its own volition, forty, fifty years away from, ahead of, the rest of him. His head bent over the pages, he read:

With the return of good times after 1878, Persepolis settled down once more to its quiet but steady growth in all the fields of its common life—in public education, in industry, in religion, in social and charitable activity. Only in politics did there remain a ferment and a disorder. When the State Farmers' Alliance, already active in the state elections of 1874, sent delegates together with delegates from the Knights of Labor to the first meeting of the Greenback Party convened at Indianapolis in 1876, the "Persepolis Free Citizen" in heated opposition characterized the Greenback leaders as "Rag-Baby wet nurses, worn-out political bummers and played-out partisan plugs about as intelligent as horse-blocks, all of them inflationists and dilutionists whose ravings would disgrace a madhouse."

This language was mild, however, compared with the contemporaneous invective directed against the workingmen's organizations. For some time the Knights of Labor were regarded by many citizens of Persepolis as a revolutionary secret society whose purpose was not the redress of the workingmen's grievances, but the overthrow of the government. Thus on September 24, 1878, the "Free Citizen" assured its readers that "if a workingman of this city would wish to be considered a shiftless lout, a footloose bummer, a loud-mouthed, long-haired brawler, a nauseous pestilence to his neighbors, and an enemy of his nation, let him douse himself in the putrid vats of Fourier, La Salle, and Marx, and emerge a full-fledged buzzard of the Knights of Labor, a glorious soldier of the blind mobocracy."

Yet the unrest of labor was a tribute to and proof of the rise of industry in Persepolis and the other cities of the state. The opening up of business opportunities, the inventions and expan-

sion of manufacturers, the increase in trade of the 1880's and 1890's stirred a feeling of patriotic pride in nearly all men. But at the same time the spectre of poverty, the fear of unemployment, the need for an easier currency, became new and pressing problems.

In the meeting of these problems, Persepolis, like nearly all the smaller cities, followed the lead of the larger. When the Federation of Trades in 1884 designated May 1, 1886, for the inauguration of the eight-hour day, the workingmen's lodges of Persepolis prepared for a struggle against the manufactories of the city, particularly against the Cantrell Iron Works. On May 1, the strike began with the vicinity of the Works and other industrial establishments heavily patrolled by police. But when news came of the rioting at the McCormick factories in Chicago, the fear of insurrection, of a reign of terror, spread like wildfire through the country. The press blamed the workingmen, duped and misled by the revolutionary doctrines of anarchists, who, according to the "Persepolis Free Citizen" of May 6, 1886, "have led American workingmen to the very brink of foul treason and raised such an insurrection as can only be crushed by powder and bullet, by iron bars and the hangman's noose."

The wave of public fear and hostility in Persepolis—

He started to his feet—the doorbell was ringing, had been ringing for a long time. He went to the window. "Josie!" he called. "The doorbell."

She waved up at him, and arose at once, going towards the house.

"I'm coming down now," he shouted to her. She nodded, and he pulled his shoes on hastily and went downstairs. "Who is it, Josie?" he asked, peering down the dim hallway.

Harvey Cantrell's voice answered: "Just me, John. . . . How are you feeling?"

"How was the ballgame?" Harriet asked.

Her husband did not answer, and she repeated the question, adding: "Wake up, Dave!"

"Uh—" he said, "the ball-game. Swell. It was close, 5 to 3. McKenna won a dollar from me on it."

"Was there a big crowd?"

He shook his head. "Nowhere near as big as it used to be. It isn't like the old days when I was a kid in this town. People rush off to the country now. Everyone's got a car, and they rush away, every man for himself. . . . It's getting nice and cool, did you notice? Where are the kids?"

"Playing out back," she said. "Maybe they ought to put on sweaters."

They sat for a time without speaking, looking up occasionally as a car swished by.

"I still can't get over it," Harriet said. "Five dollars apiece! Why, he must be rolling in money! He doesn't know how to get rid of it. And here we are—it's not fair!"

"Joe meant well," Dave said. He took a peach from the bowl on the table between them, and leaning forward, bit into it. "Just the same, if only I had some of his money. . . ."

"Well, he can't get away with it forever," she said. "One of these days he'll land in jail."

"Maybe," he mumbled, his mouth full of peach.

"Did you tell him about Louie?" she asked.

He nodded. "He thought it was swell. . . . Poor Louie, frightened to death, poor guy."

"How is she? Did you stop again after the ballgame?"

"Of course." He put down the peach-pit and wiped his hand with his handkerchief. "She had a tough time. . . . But she'll be all right. The baby, too—nice little boy."

"It's a wonder the high muck-a-mucks in the hospital let you look at her and the baby," she said.

"Now, Harriet—" he began, but she went on: "I've been simply wild all day. It makes my blood boil every time I think of it—you taking care of her all these months, and then not being able to deliver her."

"What's the sense of beginning this all over again, Harriet?"

What's the sense of eating your heart out? It's just one of those things."

"See?" she said, "you're too easygoing. Another man would make such a fuss that they'd have to do something. But you—you're so good-natured, any one can impose on you. . . . You should've kept Irene at home and delivered her yourself, that's what I say. . . . I wouldn't have given in. Never!"

"Now, Harriet, don't get excited," he said.

"Well, it's a mean shame, and I can't help get excited. . . . You should've kept her home, and everything would've been all right."

He shook his head at her. "You don't mean that, Harriet. You know you don't mean it. I couldn't take a chance with her. The hospital was the only place, you know that. Eclampsia, staining—I had to take her."

"You could've called another man in," she insisted.

"Now what's the use of all this?" He laid his hand upon her arm and turned her towards him. "You know as well as I do that the hospital was the only place for her."

"Yes," she said after a moment, "I suppose so. . . . Just the same I think it's terrible. . . . You'd think they were all the greatest specialists in the world, or something. Why can't you make them put you on their staff?"

He laughed. "Sure, just walk in and say: 'I'm on your staff.' Fat chance! . . . And stop biting your nails!"

She pulled her hand away from her mouth. "Well, then, there's only one answer."

He looked swiftly at her set face, and waited, guessing already what she was going to say.

"Palestine," she said.

He shrugged. "I knew you were going to say that. But that's out."

"Why?" she asked, "why should it be out? Why should you keep on banging your head against a stone wall? It's like what your father always said—we don't belong here, we're not wanted here.

You're not an American if you can't get from America what other people can get. Isn't that so?"

He did not answer, and she went on: "All right, then. So if you're not an American and you're not a Jew, you're nothing. Nothing," she repeated with vehemence.

"What do you want me to do—wrap myself in the praying-shawl and rush off to the synagogue?" he asked.

"Don't talk like a baby," she said. "What kind of an answer is that? I want you to be free," she went on. "Free to do your work—as much of it as you want. And if America won't give you the freedom, then there's no sense complaining about it any more. We'll leave, we'll go where you can be free—to our own country, our own people."

"This is my country, and its people are my people," he said in a low voice.

"That's how you feel," she said, "but it's not how they feel." He did not answer, and she went on more gently: "Your folks are just dying to see us—you can tell from every letter. They haven't seen the children since they were infants. And they say it's wonderful there—modern conveniences and everything. Couldn't we go just for a visit?—maybe a year. And then you could look around and see how you liked it. And if you didn't, we could come back."

"Fat chance, once we got there, of getting you to come back," he said.

"If you were unhappy, we would. But I don't think you'd be any unhappier there than you are here. Do you?"

He shook his head at her.

"Besides," she said, "the children. I don't want them to grow up and run into the same stone wall you've run into. Why should they, when they can grow up there without getting all tangled up inside the way Jews do here? I want them to be happy, too."

"You're exaggerating the whole thing," he told her heavily.

"I'm not, Dave. You know I'm not. We just don't belong here,

and that's the simple fact, without any exaggeration. And you know it."

He rose and stood looking down at her. "Yes," he said, "I suppose so. But it doesn't have to be a fact always. I got to fight this out. I don't want to run away from it. This sort of thing, prejudice, I mean, if that's what it really is, if that's what's holding me back, is not really true for this country. I want to stay to see if I can do my share in licking it. Others have—people like Brandeis, for example. In myself, maybe I could be a victory like him. Besides—" he hesitated for a long time, so long that she became impatient.

"Besides what, Dave?"

"Besides," he said, not looking at her, "there may be a way out. One you haven't thought of."

"What?" she exclaimed, "tell me what."

Still he hesitated. "I was going to wait awhile," he said, "before I told you, because it would take a lot of planning and figuring, and I—we haven't got the details worked out yet. So it may sound wild to you, Harrie. But I want you to think it over, too."

"Dave, for Heaven's sake, what is it? . . . It's just like you to be so close-mouthed and then suddenly spring surprises on me."

He sat down beside her again. "All right," he said. "This is it: I want to start a hospital of my own. Now wait," he went on quickly, "listen to the whole thing. I've been fiddling with this idea for a long time, and today I did something about it. Yes, after I left the hospital, I picked up McKenna, and we've been talking all afternoon—right through the ballgame, too."

"Is he in it, too?"

"Wait," he said, "of course, he is. He's in the same boat as I am, isn't he? . . . Well, we talked and figured all afternoon. He's crazy about the idea. But there's only one trouble: no money."

"Then what's the—"

"Not enough money, I mean. He's pretty deep in the market, he told me, but later on in the year—if things go right with his shares—we can talk business, real business. In the meantime, the

idea is to get our plans all set right down to the last detail, so we can start right in when the time comes. . . . That'll be the day! We'll be free, Harrie! With our own hospital, we'll be our own boss."

"And what, may I ask, Dave, are *you* going to use for money?"

"You don't like the idea," he told her, "I can see that. . . . You still got that Palestine bug in your head."

"No, no," she said, "it's a good idea, a fine idea. But I still want to know where you're going to get the money for your share. Otherwise, it may be a fine idea and all that, but it's just a dream, a bubble."

"I could borrow the money maybe. . . . I don't know. Maybe the bank—"

She shook her head. "What could you put up for collateral? Besides I don't like the idea of borrowing."

He made an impatient gesture. "That's silly, Harrie. It's a regular business practice. Why, if men didn't borrow money for their business, there wouldn't be any business."

"I don't care," she told him, "I just don't like the idea of borrowing. I wouldn't care if you used every cent we've got if you think this idea is really worthwhile, but if you borrowed, I wouldn't be able to sleep nights, worrying. I'd go crazy. You can't, I won't let you borrow."

"Don't be so bossy," he told her. "Someone'd think I was working for you."

"You are! For me and the children."

"And for myself?" he asked, smiling.

"Oh," she said, "that's unfair, Dave. I didn't mean—"

"I know, I know. Don't get excited. I was just teasing you."

"I mean it, Dave. On someone else's money, I wouldn't, but I'd take a chance on every cent we've got if it was enough."

He looked at her. "It's not," he said, "but it could be. Maybe."

"What do you mean? You know we haven't got anywhere near enough—not even three thousand. Or is it enough?" she asked, her look brightening upon him.

"You were right the first time, Harrie. Nowhere near enough."

"Then what—?"

He leaned towards her, his expression grave, and said slowly: "Harrie, would you be willing to take a chance on every cent we've got? Would you really?"

"Yes, I would," she said. "I mean, if it would make you—"

"Then you don't see what I'm driving at?"

She shook her head.

"The stock market!" he exclaimed. "We'll take a chance. We'll gamble. What McKenna's doing. What everybody's doing as far as I can find out!"

She sat very still for a moment. "Every cent?" she asked.

"Practically," he told her.

"I don't like it," she told him. "I—but all right! If that's what you want to do, if that's the only way, all right. But suppose you lose, suppose—"

"Suppose, suppose," he mocked her gently. "It's all 'suppose,' but if McKenna is right and his broker is right and President Hoover is right and all the other people who say that the country is booming—then there's no 'suppose' about it. Besides McKenna and I agreed to get as much margin as we could, to carry all we can. And to get out with our profits by New Year's—I mean, we're not going to be hogs and keep our money in even if there's more profits to be got by hanging on—and put our money right to work on the hospital."

"But nearly every cent?"

He nodded. "To get enough out of it, we'll have to."

"All right, Dave," she said. "If you're convinced it's all right, then it's all right with me." She stopped. "On one condition."

"Here's the catch," he said, smiling. "I know you wouldn't let me get away with it entirely. What is it—do you want to go back to nursing when the hospital's ready? Be superintendent maybe?"

But she did not smile. "On one condition," she repeated. "I'm no fool, Dave. You had this idea about raising the money all worked out before you began to tell me even. You and Neil Mc-

Kenna fixed it all up even before you talked to me."

"I knew you wouldn't let me borrow," he said. "I wanted you to see there was only one way. . . . Now what's your condition?"

"If it doesn't work out for some reason or another, and honest to God, Dave, I hope it does, will you go to Palestine?"

He stared at her. "God," he said at last, "your folks certainly raised a stubborn little Zionist in you, didn't they?"

"I'm not asking you to crawl off to a hole in the desert," she said bitterly. "You'd think that Palestine was a dump—"

"Okay. Don't get started on that again. I accept the condition. . . . Now are you satisfied?"

She said soberly: "I'm going to do a lot of worrying the next few months, Dave."

"Oh, you!—you're not happy unless you're worrying." He put an arm around her. "It's all settled then," he said excitedly. "Give's a kiss for luck, Harrie."

"Not here, Dave," she told him, trying to pull away, "people are going by."

"The hell with people," he said. "It's a free country."

She kissed him, and said: "It's clouding up. Let's get the kids in."

"Just beat the storm, I guess," Tommy said. He pointed to the clouds banking up overhead.

Francis eased the car into the garage. "I hope the rain holds off," he said. "I was thinking that your mother and I might be going out tonight. Maybe up to the park to see the fireworks. You won't mind staying home with Grandfather, Tommy? Delia won't be home till late."

"Okay with me," Tommy said. "Sure, I'll stay."

So it was settled now, Francis thought. All he had to do was ask Josie. She would be surprised. She might not want to go. He turned to his son. "Listen, Tommy, it's a long time since your mother's been out of an evening. So when I ask her to go, you put in your nickel's worth and tell her to go, too. . . . She might not want to leave your grandfather."

"Leave it to me, Dad," Tommy said. "I got powers of oratory you don't know about!"

Francis grinned down at him. "You said a mouthful, sonny."

They went up the porch steps, and saw John Cantrell sitting in a chair in a dusky corner. His voice, light and vague, came to them out of the shadow. "Francis? Tommy?"

"Well, here we are—right on the dot," Tommy said. "Get ready for a big display of fireworks, Grandfather."

"Francis?"

"Yes, Father, what is it? You feeling all right? Where's Josie?" Francis asked, alarmed by the quietness, the thinness of his father-in-law's voice.

"I'll run up and get her." Tommy started for the front door. "I don't want her to miss—"

His grandfather interrupted him. "Just stay here, Tommy. Your mother's resting in her room. She—she—" His voice faltered.

Francis said quickly: "Look, kid, get the fireworks, will you? Get them ready. They're out in the garage, aren't they?"

"Sure, but Mother—"

"I'll get Mother. We'll all be here by the time you get the pieces set up."

"Oke," Tommy said, and ran swiftly down the stairs and towards the garage.

Francis peered at the old man in the dusk. "Father . . . ?"

"Harvey was here, Francis," John said.

Francis exclaimed incoherently.

The quiet thin voice went on: "He said it was just as well, after all, that you weren't here. He said maybe we could do something with you. He said—"

"Did he tell you about—?" Francis broke off. His heart was shaking with shame, with rage, with bitter disappointment. "Josie—what did she say?"

"Nothing," the old voice said. "She just listened to what he had to say, and told him when he finished that you'd always done what

you thought best. He went away after that, and Josie went upstairs to her room."

"How long ago was this?" Francis put his fingers on the latch of the screen door.

"Oh, I don't know. What difference does it make? . . . God-almighty, Francis, why are you standing here chattering? Go up to her, man. In God's name!"

"Yes. Yes, I will," Francis stammered. "Yes." He went into the house. His feet stumbled on the stairs, his cold hand clung to the banister. When he stood before her door, his body felt like ice. He tapped on the door, but there was no reply. He stood irresolute and grieving, knowing now in stinging despair the vanity of his hope that her love could heal the deep wound of his self-division, and drew back a pace. But then he imagined her listening to Harvey's words urging her to hold her husband to the course that she had so long ago shuddered away from, learning from Harvey's amused description of what Harvey took to be a sickish whim on his part that Harvey had not been able to shake him from his resolve, and urging her to force him back upon the course again—imagined the shock and turmoil in her mind and her terrible struggle not to betray her feeling until she had been able to say good-by composedly to Harvey, and then flee, her feet fumbling on the stairs, to her room.

Yet, for another moment, his hand upraised above the dark panel of her door, he felt, tasting the bitterness of an unwilling choice, a despair that almost sickened him. Then he heard his son's voice, light and clear, from the porch: "Gosh, Grandfather, where are they? I got everything all ready for the big show."

While he listened for John's murmuring reassurance, he turned the doorknob as if his son's voice had unlocked the tension within him. Then he was inside, the palm of his hand gently pushing the door to behind him. "Josie?" he murmured against the quick beating of his heart. "Josie?" She was not there. He looked from the armchair by the window to her bed and then to the bench before

her dressing table, but in the mirror saw only his own vague shadow, as if in this room so long unknown to him he could not yet achieve the shape of solid substance, or as if he had begun to fade away, to have no longer his own meaning in a room whose closed door shut him off from his own world. In the next moment he saw that the connecting door between his room and Josie's was open, open as if it had never been closed. He took a step towards it, and Josie's voice, low and shaken, said: "Is that you, Father?"

"No," he said hoarsely. "It's me, Francis." There was a little silence while he peered, without moving, into the dim doorway. His struggling will withdrew him so that he felt remote from her and cold.

She said: "I've been waiting for you, Francis."

In sudden bitterness it seemed to him that her voice was complacent with the kindness of the conqueror who in victory can afford to be kind. Nothing she can say or do will please me now, he thought.

But when he heard her deep racking sob, as if she were the vanquished one, he went quickly through the doorway, and she arose from his bed and came into his arms, her face pressed hard against his throat so that he felt the long shuddering sobs that shook her. He pressed his lips against her head and murmured: "No, Josie, darlin'—no need to cry now," and was surprised to hear how tranquil his voice was. He had expected himself to be overcome and seeking the comfort of her arms, rather than that she should seek his. She understood then what she had done to him, he mused while she pressed closer to him as if in a moment to weld together their long-broken marriage.

She raised her head, her face glimmering in the dusk of the room. "Forgive me, Francis," she said.

"Yes. It's all right, Josie," he told her quickly. "My love, we'll be happy again. You'll see," understanding clearly now that the struggle between them was not over, but only that it had shifted to another battleground, and that the heavy burden of his surren-

der now lay upon her shoulders. I must make it easy for her, he mused, as easy as I can. His love and his pity ran together, and at last he could respond to the plea of her embrace. His hands caressed her head. "There's enough now of cryin', Josie darlin'," he said, "I was goin' to break it to you easier like." He kissed her trembling mouth.

After a time, she stopped crying. He held her close while her sobs still started and shuddered away. At length he said: "Josie, are you all right now?"

She nodded, holding her face close to his.

"Then don't you want to freshen up? They're waiting for us downstairs, and I wouldn't want young Tommy to come charging—"

"I forgot," she said, "I forgot all about them. . . ."

Yes, he thought, while she was washing her face in the bathroom, it's already begun for her. She forgot them, for thinking, for worrying about me.

As they came timidly out onto the porch, young Tommy leaped up. "It's about time! We've been waiting for hours." His quick hand struck the light-switch. His voice stopped, and he stammered at the sight of his mother's pale face and the dark shadows under her eyes. "Are you all right, Mother? What . . . ?"

Francis turned the light off. "Your mother's had a bad headache, kid. But she's feeling better now."

Josie said: "Yes, dear. I feel much better. . . . Now how about your fireworks?"

"You all right now?" John Cantrell said. "That's fine, that's fine. That's—"

"Hold it, Grandfather," Tommy said, "you sound like a cracked record." He laughed and ran down the steps, calling back to them: "Watch these! They'll put your eye out." In a moment a soft radiance bloomed on the lawn, and Francis put his arm around his wife's shoulders.

Out of his dim corner old John Cantrell said to no one in particular: "It's been a great Fourth of July."

IT WAS close to midnight, but a good many cars were still on the road hurrying back to the city. They swept past Eddie Mundy's parked car with a swish, but sometimes one would whirl by full of confused and noisy rejoicings, its occupants leaning far out occasionally to yell "Whoopie!" against the soft starless night. Occasionally they got a glimpse of a family-laden car, slower than the rest, the father bent a little wearily over the wheel, the mother holding in her lap the youngest child who slept, face turned against her bosom. They heard, too, a girl's quick bubbling laughter, and at the sound Eddie smiled down at Elena, sitting a little stiffly in the circle of his arm. "Someone'd think I was going to bite your head off," he said to her. In the dusk of the car, looking down sideways at her face, he took in with delight its soft paleness and the large dark eyes that seemed to sleep in a daze of pleasure.

"They've all had a happy day, I guess," she said.

"And you, Elena? How about you?"

"I think I've never had a happier one," she told him.

He had never got used to her directness. "You mean that?" he asked her.

"I wouldn't say it if I didn't."

"Because of me?" he insisted.

"Because of you, Eddie."

"That deserves a kiss." Gravely and still a little shyly she let him kiss her. "When we're married—"

"I still can't believe it," she said. "Us getting married, I mean."

"Why not?" he asked with amusement.

"Oh, you always seemed so standoffish, Eddie. As if business was the only thing that mattered."

"It was, I guess, until I started taking you out." He told himself that he sounded like a real farmboy when he tried to say something nice to her. "It sounds stupid," he said, "but I mean it. You don't get much chance to make pretty speeches when you're practising law."

Far away thunder rolled under the horizon, and she leaned for-

ward, peering out through the windshield. "It's going to rain soon," she said.

"Let it. We're cozy here." He drew her against him.

"They'll be worried about me."

"It's all right," he said, "it isn't twelve yet. Fourth of July's not over, and you promised me the whole day."

She laughed softly. "That's what I get for taking up with a lawyer." She sat back in the circle of his arm again.

"Joe'll be pleased," he said.

"Joe? What—"

"Oh, I was just thinking about you telling your folks about us, and I thought of Joe. He's been very short with me lately, and I knew it was because of you. You and me."

"He's got enough to do minding his own business," Elena said. "Especially seeing what his business is."

"Oh, it was all right, kind of funny, to see him being the big brother—protecting the little sister and all that. You know what I mean. . . . Wondering if my intentions towards you were honorable or something."

"He makes me sick," she said. "I wish you didn't have anything to do with him. Nothing at all!"

"Oh, it's just business with us, that's all," he said easily.

"Do you have to do business with a bootlegger, a gangster?"

"Business is business, Elena."

"Let some other lawyer do his business!"

He laughed. "Bossing me even before we're married!"

"Anyway," she said, with strong satisfaction, "he's due for a shock soon."

"What?" he asked quickly. "What do you mean, Elena—a shock?"

"We're going to make him take his rotten old hooch out of the barn, that's what. . . . The money's not worth it to us to have Pete's and Caterina's kids know what's going on and hearing his gangsters' dirty talk. And besides, suppose the police should find

out? They'd arrest us all, and that would be a fine thing, wouldn't it?"

"You don't have to worry about that, Elena. That's one thing you don't have to worry about."

"Don't be so sure," she said. "Every day in the papers. . . . We don't want to be mixed up in his dirty business."

"Like me," he said after a pause.

"Well, I just wish you weren't his lawyer."

He laughed. "I can see I'm going to have trouble with you. You're like my mother—got a mind of your own and don't mind speaking it."

The thunder rattled again, closer this time.

"I'd better get you home before the storm breaks," he said. "How about a kiss? . . . Now don't you worry about me and Joe, will you, Elena?" he said as he started the car. "Just remember we'll be married inside of a year." When she did not answer, he patted her shoulder and sent the car forward.

On the way home he began to tell her about Indie. "A lawyer runs into some queer specimens," he said. He asked her if she had ever heard of a prizefighter, a nigger called the Black Tiger in the papers, whose real name was Frankie Whipple.

"Joe's talked about him," she said.

Well, Eddie had known him for nine or ten years, ever since he first came in with his manager to have a contract drawn up. He'd been in quite a few times since, but she'd never guess why. "He wants to buy an island," he said with an abrupt snort of laughter.

"An island?"

"Yes, an island, with no one else living on it. All for himself. An island anywhere." He had just talked about it for a little while every time he came into the office, but the last month or so he had become insistent. "So I've been writing to real-estate firms, the biggest ones in New York, to try to buy an island for him," he said. "I bet they think I'm crazy, but they're corresponding with me just the same."

She didn't see why they'd think he was crazy—they could think

it was a rich man buying it for a summer home maybe. "Or maybe he wants to be a big bootlegger—keep his hooch on it," she added.

"You got bootleggers on the brain, darling," he said sourly.

Maybe the nigger was crazy, she told him.

"Punch-drunk," he said. "No, I don't think so. . . . He never told me why he wanted it, and I never asked him. He just wants an island, the way some people want something that other people don't care much about, and aren't happy till they get it."

There were a couple of little islands out in the river behind the house, she told him, but there was hardly anything to them. Three or four trees—just big enough to put a tent on.

He shook his head. "After all, he wants to be able to move around on it. He wants to live on it the whole year around."

It sounded crazy to her, she said, as they turned off the Pike onto the dirt road, but if it was going to make the nigger happy, then she hoped Eddie would find an island for him.

"Don't worry," he said. "There's not much you can't buy nowadays."

"I know," she said abruptly. "The way Joe's bought you."

He was angered by her plain speech. "For God's sake, Elena, you're marrying me, not my office! I asked you before—forget about Joe, will you?"

She did not reply, and they cut off the dirt road and onto the track that led up to the house. When he stopped the car, he turned and seized her strongly in his arms. "You get me so mad, I could break your neck with pleasure," he muttered against her averted face. "But I'm so crazy about you, I don't care what you say to me."

Before she could reply, a bulky body came suddenly out of the darkness into the glow of the headlights, and she shrank back against Eddie.

"It's me—Pete," his voice said, "don't get scared."

"You frightened me to death!" Elena said. She and Eddie got out of the car.

"What's up?" Eddie asked. "Something wrong?"

Everything was okay, Pete told them, talking in a low voice, but Joe had been there that afternoon waiting for them when they got back from town. They had had a long argument with him.

"I wish I'd been here!" Elena exclaimed.

"Now wait a minute, Elena," Eddie said. "Let Pete finish."

Pete said: "I can't figure you out, Mr. Mundy—"

"Never mind me," Eddie said sharply, "I had enough of that for one evening . . ."

Pete went on. Joe had a big load coming in a couple of hours.

Elena grabbed his arm. "Now? Tonight, you mean?"

Pete nodded. The stuff was on its way—four truckloads. "He was so excited I thought he'd kill us. . . . We had to pull him and Leo apart."

"Why'd you let him put it over on you?" Elena asked.

Well, Joe had said he'd bring the trucks in no matter what they said. That was when he and Leo had jumped on each other.

What had happened then, Elena asked him.

So, Pete went on, they had settled on a flat sum for the use of the barn till next spring, and then Joe would get his stuff away for good. It was final.

"I would never let him stay," Elena burst out. "No matter how much money! Didn't we all say that the next time he came he'd have to take his hooch away from here? Why'd you let him talk you out of it?"

"The money. A big sock of money. What else?" Pete said. "That's the whole reason. If not, I would've jumped on him with Leo, and we would've thrown him right off the place."

"Yes, you would!"

"Listen, Elena, don't be so sure of yourself. This's been a tough year for us. You know that. We ain't made a nickel. What we're gonna get from Joe'll carry us along. We'll be sittin' pretty."

"And how about the kids? What did Caterina say?"

Pete shrugged. What could Caterina say? A few more months couldn't make much difference anyway.

"Yes, and it'll be nice if the police show up some fine day, and put us all in jail," Elena said.

"You don't have to worry about the police, Elena," Eddie said. "I told you that before."

"Just the same—"

Pete interrupted her, jerking his head at Eddie. "Didn't you hear what he said? It's the fix. The cops won't be here."

She was silent for a long moment. "Then why are you waiting out here?" she asked bitterly. "You going to kiss him when he comes?"

"I'm collectin' as soon as he pulls in. That's why," Pete said stolidly.

She said in a strained voice: "I wouldn't touch a cent of his dirty rotten money!" and ran stumblingly towards the house.

After a moment, Eddie got into the car and started the motor. "'Night, Pete," he said.

"Good-night, Mister Fixer," Pete said evenly.

The car moved off in the first big drops of the rain.

So FAR, so good, Joe said to himself. He was on the road with the trucks because he wasn't taking any chances with this load that was worth more than twenty grand. When the rain started, he speeded up to get in behind the black canvas-covered hulk of the truck lumbering steadily along the Pike. This stretch from outside the city to the dirt road that led up to the farm was the danger spot. He laid his hand hard over the button of the horn, and after a moment the truck picked up more speed. Somewhere on the Pike close behind him the other three trucks were coming along. Pretty soon, less than half an hour, they'd be safe at the farm.

Anger flared in him again as he thought of his fight in the afternoon. That Leo, he'd like to cut his heart out. If they didn't want him and his money any more, the hell with them—he'd buy a farm of his own. He was a sap not to think of it before. There were

plenty around that could be picked up for a song. Mundy could take care of buying it for him. He'd get some monkey with a wife and family to run the place, make it a good cover, keep all the stuff there. No one'd get wise in a thousand years. He smiled to himself, and looked at his wristwatch.

Occasionally a car passed going towards the city, its lights flashing on the wet black road. He was playing in luck. Not many cars out on a night like this, and those that were, the rain was making them mind their own business. Ahead of him the truck moved steadily through the soft rain-washed darkness.

Let them try to run the farm without the jack they got from him. They'd come begging him to come back—the dumb monkeys, stinking of fertilizer, breaking their backs over the ground trying to raise their two-for-a-cent vegetables. "Stupid suckers," he mumbled, his hands firm and proud on the chromium wheel, his back resting easily against the red leather upholstery.

The tires swished softly, and the dark wet-gleaming masses of the trees loomed and vanished and reappeared in the shine of his headlights. It wouldn't be long now. Ten, fifteen minutes they'd be off the Pike and onto the dirt road.

The brake light on the truck ahead winked on red, and he realized it was slowing down. At first he thought it was because they were taking a curve, but he remembered that the road ran straight as a string till the turn-off. Then the truck stopped. He drew up slowly towards the back of the truck, and leaned out of the side window. In the shine of the truck's lights he saw a state trooper still astraddle his motorcycle motioning Connie down out of the cab. In a couple of minutes the other trucks would be pulling up, he thought swiftly, and then he'd be sunk. Sunk good. No one, not even Eddie Mundy, would be able to fix this. Twenty grand down the sink, and he in the state pen.

He saw Connie getting down out of the cab, and pulling out from behind the truck, he jammed his foot down on the accelerator, sending the car with a sudden leap and a blinding glare of headlights down upon the trooper. For a moment he saw, as if fixed

like statuary against the night, the white startled face of the trooper, his putteed leg angled towards the ground and the dark figure of the driver, one foot dangling from the running board of the truck. Then he crashed into the motorcycle and jerked forward, felt the wheel twist in his hands and thud against his chest as he slowed towards the embankment of the road and brought the car to a bucking stop with his foot pushing the brake down to the floor. He was shaking as he stumbled out of the car and ran back towards the truck.

Connie said: "You sure smacked him, boss."

"Shut up—find him!" Joe said.

The motorcycle had been thrown halfway up the embankment. The trooper, looking dead, lay crumpled at right angles to the shoulder of the road. Shaking, Joe bent over him, but in the blackness, fearful of fumbling blood onto his hands, he could not bear to touch him.

Behind him, Connie said: "Now what, boss?"

Joe straightened up. He fought to keep his voice steady. "Listen," he said, "I'll take care of this. You go ahead with the truck. Park inside the dirt road, and wait to make sure the other guys don't miss the turn. Get the stuff unloaded fast, and blow back right away with the trucks to the garage. Get it?"

"Check," Connie said.

He turned, but Joe seized his arm. "And listen—you blow outa town, see?"

Connie said: "Jes's, boss, do you think I'd stool?"

"For Chris' sake, will you listen to me? Get out till I give you the office to come back. Take a vacation, go to Florida, but screw out, you hear me?"

"Check," Connie said. "I'm on my way, boss."

"And if some monkey on the farm asks for me, tell him I'll be along soon."

"And double-check," Connie said. In a moment the truck's motor roared, and he was gone.

Joe ran back to the roadster and let it down on the road. When

he pulled up beside the body of the trooper, he sent a frantic look up and down the highway, and crouched as the next two trucks rolled by. So far he'd played in luck. "Now what?" he mumbled. Suppose someone had squealed, suppose one of the drivers had shot off his drunken mouth in some speak? There'd never before been a trooper on this stretch of road at this hour. Maybe someone had tipped them off. He couldn't know. But he couldn't take a chance. He watched the fourth truck go past.

Then he shut off the headlight that was still glowing—the other had been smashed—and in the next moment leaped up the embankment and dragged the motorcycle down beside the car. He threw open the rumble seat and heaved the cycle on, wedging it between the cab of the car and the raised back of the seat. He panted as he worked, muddying his clothes, feeling the rain wetting him through. When the motorcycle was on, he tucked his topcoat down over it. He looked up and down the road again and saw headlights approaching from the direction of the river bridge. He crouched down behind the roadster until the car went by.

He had to cover up, cover up so no one would know. He bent over the dark rain-soaked body of the trooper, listening for a breath, a sigh, a groan, hoping wildly that he was dead so that he would not have to strike the shattering finishing blow. He heard nothing but the soft fall of the rain whispering upon the leaves overhead and its muted chatter upon the metal of the car.

He pulled open the further door of the roadster and again bent over the trooper. Jerkily, with head averted so that he could not see the face, he caught the body under the armpits and dragged it around the car. He heaved it up somehow on the running board, and stopped for breath with his heart pounding and his head shaking uncontrollably. He clamped his jaws together and held his neck rigid, but still his head shook. At length he got into the car, and kneeling on the floor, dragged the body up and into the seat beside the driver's. Then he slumped behind the wheel, for the first time aware of the grinding pain in his chest where he had been thrown against the wheel. The pain quickened as he drew a shuddering

breath, but, squeezing as far away as possible from the crumpled figure with the dangling head, he started the car and drove down the Pike.

As he passed the turn-off, he peered into the wet dark for the trucks, but could see nothing. Five minutes later, approaching the bridge, he slowed down. For what he was going to do now, he had to wait till the bridge was clear. Two or three cars passed him as he came up to the bridge, and from one of them he heard a shout: "Light's out!"

"Smart bastard," he muttered to himself, peering through the windshield at the vaguely silhouetted bridge girders ahead of him.

As he came onto the bridge, he saw a single car coming, and drove slowly till it passed him by. Then he stopped and looked back. There was nothing in sight. He clamped his jaws together again and leaped out and around to the other side of the car. He opened the door and with rigid clawing fingers seized the trooper. But as he did so, he heard a groan and the body moved in his hands. He leaped back as if the groaning figure had struck him. Then he moaned while the shivering fit struck him again: "Buddy, I can't help it. I can't help it, buddy," and hauled the crumpled body out of the car, while his head moved left and right, left and right as if regulated by a clock-work mechanism, to see if any car were in sight. Strainingly he lifted the body to the shoulder-high iron railing. He stood panting, the body's weight sustained against his chest almost as if he were cradling it. It seemed to him, as he pushed it over the railing, that it groaned again. But then it was gone down into the darkness below the bridge and down into the dark water. "I can't help it, buddy," he moaned again into the darkness.

He ran around to the back of the car, jerked off his topcoat, climbed up on the mudguard, and cased the motorcycle to the bridge floor. Then he crouched and got his shoulder under it, straightened, staggered a moment as his balance failed him, pulled himself erect once more, and as pain shot through his chest again, shot the cycle up and over the railing. It scraped clatteringly, and

then toppled over and down. His head turned left, right, left—and he saw the glow of headlights coming down the bridge.

"Jesus!" he moaned, and stood transfixed. He ran back to his car, scrambled into the seat, and got the motor going, but in a moment jumped out again and stood in front of the car, his legs close together concealing the license plate.

The other car slowed up and stopped, its motor idling, and the driver said: "*I thought* I heard a crash. You all right, Mister?"

"Yeah, I skidded into the rail," Joe said shortly.

"Smashed one of your lights too, I see."

"It's all right, buddy," Joe said.

"Will she run?"

"Yeah, I just had the motor goin'."

"You sound kind of shaken up," the other said; "I could give you a ride to town. You—"

"I'm goin' the other way."

"Tell you what. . . . I could stop at a garage and send a mechanic out with a new light for you. It's tough driving on a night like this with only one—"

"I'll make out," Joe said.

"You sure you're all right? Like I said, you sound—"

"Listen," Joe said, "push off!"

"What?"

"I said: push off! Screw outa here!"

"Well! That's a fine way when someone wants to—"

"Who the hell ast you? Go on! Screw outa here with that can!"

There was a moment of silence. Then the voice, hurt and outraged, said: "*O-kay!* If that's how you feel when someone wants to—" The car jerked forward, and drew away down the bridge.

"Christ!" Joe said. He got into the roadster and turned it around. He had to go to the farm. If this nosy monkey was to stop and tell someone—he grew frightened again, backed the car around, and drove furiously down the bridge onto the Pike. A grinding pain worked in his chest. "I'll have to see a doctor," he said to himself.

When he turned off into the dirt road, he suddenly felt safe. He stopped the car and straightened his clothes, putting on his topcoat and buttoning it close up. It was soaking wet, but if he had to get out of the car, it would hide his muddy clothes. A few minutes later he stopped in front of the house, and leaned out to look at the barn. He saw vaguely the bulk of the trucks, and the lights inside. Then he heard Pete's subdued voice: "That you, Joe?"

"Yeah. It's me. I s'pose you wouldn't sleep all night if I didn't show up to pay you leeches off."

"What're you sore about?" Pete said. "It's what you wanted, ain't it?"

"Here," Joe said. He put his hand inside his topcoat and gave his brother a thick envelope.

"Okay," Pete said, and turned back to the house.

"Sweet dreams," Joe said after him. "Wait, Pete!"

Pete stopped. "Don't yell. You'll wake the whole place up. What d'you want now?"

"Is Connie still here? You know, the guy on the first truck?"

"He just pulled out before you got here. He—"

"Check," Joe said. "That's all I wanted to know." He started the car again and turned back towards the Pike. His chest ached so that he could hardly breathe. He meant at first to drive straight to Dave Bandler's and tell him he'd been in an accident, but he decided to go to his place before he saw Dave because he'd heard somewhere that doctors had to report accidents.

He drove to the flat by a roundabout route so that he wouldn't be stopped by some dumb flatfoot who would ask questions about the broken headlight, and ran the car into the garage. He had played in luck all around, he told himself, as he stripped off his wet dirty clothes in the bathroom, grunting occasionally with pain. When he was naked, he looked into the mirror and saw the large dark congestion of the bruise angling across his chest.

He bathed and dressed again in fresh clothes, then called a cab, and went to Dave Bandler's house. He rang the bell a long peal, and at last the hall light went on flashingly, the door opened, and

Dave's voice said: "What is it? Who—Joe!"

"Didn't expect to see me twice on the same day, huh, Dave?" He managed to grin. "Nothin' excitin' about this," he said when they were in the examination room and he had stripped to the waist while Dave's blunt-tipped fingers palpated his chest and ribs.

"How'd it happen?" Dave asked too casually.

"You'll laugh, Dave. I was gettin' outa the bathtub and slipped—bang! The first thing I know I'm layin' on the floor. I smacked into the edge of the tub as I went down."

"I'm not surprised," Dave said. "Do you know there's more serious accidents in the home than anywhere else? Far more?"

"Is that a fact!"

Dave straightened up. "You're lucky it's no worse. Two ribs fractured. If you'd hit your head, you'd still be lying there."

"Cut it out," Joe told him. "You'll give me the heeby-jeebies. . . ." And then suddenly with appalling brilliance he felt the wet bulk of the groaning trooper moving under his stiff hands, and his face contracted in such a grimace that Dave said: "Easy, Joe . . . I'll just be a couple of minutes more." He looked at the shine of sweat on Joe's face. "It can't hurt that much, Joe."

His firm hands briskly turned adhesive tape over the other's chest.

Joe opened his eyes. "It kind of got me for a minute. . . . I mighta been killed."

Dave laughed. "They say that only the good die young."

"Yeah," Joe said. If the cops were at his place now? If they were going over the car? If they were looking for blood on his clothes? . . . Suppose when he went back to the dark flat, a rain-wet river-soaked softly groaning crumpled body cradled into his arms? He shivered.

"Here, smell this," Dave said to him.

The pungent spirits tingled in his nostrils.

"You're more scared than anything else," Dave went on. "A tough guy like you."

"Yeah, I'm tough all right," Joe said. If the monkey on the bridge

reported it? If Connie was picked up? If they found the . . . right away?

" . . . could go to the hospital now, and have the X-rays first thing in the morning. Just to make sure," Dave was saying. He helped Joe off the table. "You better take another good whiff of ammonia—you're white as a ghost."

He could not go back to the dark flat with maybe a bubbling groan floating out at him in the darkness. "Sure, Dave. Sure," he said eagerly. "I'll go right now. . . . You'll fix it up, huh, Dave?"

"I'll call up." Dave pulled down the sleeves of his dressing gown, and began to tidy up. "Next year at this time," he said casually, "I'll be running my own hospital, I figure."

Joe did not answer, but when Dave looked around at him, he started and said: "Swell, Dave, swell. Nice goin'." If I close my eyes, he thought frantically, I'll feel the guy riding on my chest again. . . . He stared at the light-bulb until Dave called in from his office: "It's all set, Joe. I'm calling a cab for you."

When the cab turned into the Square, and Joe saw the pale wood of the reviewing stand glimmering in the now slackening rain he said half-aloud: "Some Fourth July!"

AFTER supper when young Tommy had gone upstairs to do his home-work, they listened to Amos and Andy on the radio. Josie, sitting in the shadow away from the lamp, covertly watched the bitter set of Francis's mouth, the vertical crease of his brows even while he chuckled. "How'd things go today, Francis?" she asked him as Amos and Andy finished.

"I'se regusted," he said, not smiling.

"No business?" John Cantrell asked. He shut off the radio, and turned his chair about.

"No business," Francis said. "In bad times even lawyers do bad business. . . . A half-crazy Polack came in to see me today. Lost every nickel he had in the crash. He wanted to know if he could sue his broker for giving him bad market advice. Said he'd give me half of whatever I could get for him." He laughed abruptly. "I was going to put the same proposition to him, if he'd go and see Harvey Cantrell for me. . . . I wonder who Harvey would like to sue. From what he told me last July, he was up to his neck in the market."

"Was he really?" old John said reflectively.

"He sure was. But he'll land on his feet all right. While here I am, back where I started thirty years ago—"

"Please, Francis," Josie said, "don't think about it."

"What's done is done," the old man said.

They looked at him nervously, while he said with harsh petulance: "I don't like sitting in a two-by-four office all day long waiting for clients. No one comes in except crazy people like the Polack. I'll go crazy myself." His look turned upon them defiantly.

They said nothing.

"It makes me laugh," he went on, "when I think of the beautiful pipe dreams I had. Remember?—a trip around the world, a nice place in the country." He made an abrupt upward gesture with his arm. "All up the flue."

"There's no sense brooding about it, Francis," John said. He looked at Josie, but she was quiet, watching Francis. "I told you before, those things are still yours if you want them. Some day whatever I got will be yours and Josie's and the boy's. It makes no difference to me whether I give it to you now or then. I—"

"Don't talk like that, Father," Josie said.

"Don't be a baby, Josie. I'm eighty-eight. How much longer can I last? If what I got will make anybody happier now, why shouldn't I—?" In a different tone, he said: "But it's not the money, is it, Francis?"

"No," Francis said. "It's not the money." His glance went quickly to Josie and away again. He stood up. "I got to go out," he told them, looking over their heads. "I got to go to a meeting downtown."

After he went, Josie and her father sat without speaking for a little while.

Then Josie said: "What do I do now, Father?"

He shook his head. "I don't know, Josie. I don't know."

"If it's the lack of something to do that makes him this way. . . ."

"It was what I was afraid of," John told her.

"It's my fault. I forced him to it. But I couldn't help it, Father. And I can't help him now."

"Francis knew what he was doing." He peered across the room at her. "He'll work it out somehow."

"It's killing him," she said. "You can tell by looking at him. . . ." She rose to her feet. "You must get awfully tired of my complaining, Father. It seems to me that lately I've whimpered at you every time we've sat down together."

"It's all right, Josie. Things'll be all right. They'll work out somehow. You'll see," he assured her. But his heart was heavy, and he sat a long time after she had gone upstairs.

When the hall clock struck nine, he stirred in the chair. It was time to go to bed. But Delia came in just as he was rising, and said: "They's a man out here wants to see you, Mister John. A peddler or somethin'."

"At this hour? Tell him it's too late."

"He says he knows you. Name of Schaeffer."

"Godalmighty, Delia, why didn't you say so in the first place?" he exclaimed. "Put a couple of lights on in here, and fetch him in." He wondered what she meant by calling Albert Schaeffer a peddler, but when Al came in a moment later carrying a black fabrikoid case, he understood. "Sit down, Albert," he said. "How are you all?"

"We're all fine," Al said.

The old man was about to ask how things were at the store, but he remembered that the store was gone. When he had read the bankruptcy notice in the *Chronicle* in January, it had given him a bad start. Even now it was hard to realize that the store so carefully tended by Albert's grandfather and Marius and by the boy himself was gone. It was as if a part of the city had dropped out of sight into the ground. He remembered when it had opened in '81, hardly more than a hole in the wall, in the days when Marius had gone peddling all over the countryside in his wagon with the kitchenware slung up on it and the awkward roan horse pulling easily between the shafts, while his father stayed and ran the store. Regret struck him, and a sense of guilt, too. When he read the notice in the paper, he had called Emily Schaeffer to ask if he could help, but she had told him firmly, no, they were managing all right. Yes, she'd call him if she. . . . He had made her prom-

ise, but in all these weeks he had not heard from her. He should have called again. He looked at Albert sitting stiffly in the chair and thought that perhaps he had come to ask for help. He'd do what he could, he thought, he'd be only too glad to do what he could.

He was astonished when Al knelt down on the floor and began to undo the straps of the case at his feet, saying: "I didn't come here on purpose, Mr. Cantrell. . . . I mean . . . not because you were Pa's friend. I'm working this street, been on it all afternoon. . . . So when I got to your house. . . ." While he threw off disjointed, and, to the old man, completely bewildering talk, he was quickly undoing the straps. Now he rose and dragged the case forward to John Cantrell's chair.

"I take orders too if there's anything there you can't use. . . . Of course, I can't carry everything with me. . . ." and his look, humble and disturbed, rose to the old man's face which was turned down in wonder at the neatly stacked piles of socks, undershirts, ties, and handkerchiefs in the fabrikoid case.

John Cantrell's heart contracted with pity. "What is it, Albert? What're you doing?"

"I'm selling from door to door, Mr. Cantrell. I told the woman who answered—"

"She told me a peddler, Albert. Are you—are you the one?"

"Yes, Mr. Cantrell." Al saw the old man's thin, brown-spotted fingers trembling. "Like I told you—I'm working this neighborhood this week so that's how I'm here. Of course, I know it's late, and if—"

"No, no, boy, it's all right. Stay," John Cantrell said, suddenly seeing in the upturned face Marius's deep sombre gaze looking out at him. "Why didn't you tell me? I would've helped you. Godalmighty, I'll help you now! Don't you know your father was my best friend? I take it badly of your mother and you not to tell me, not to call on me—" He broke off and waved his hand down at the fabrikoid box. "How long you been going around like that? Since the store closed?"

Al nodded. "It's all right, Mr. Cantrell. I—"

"Your mother gave me her word on the 'phone that she'd call me."

Al pulled his bulky body off the floor. "I just came here to sell things, Mr. Cantrell. I didn't come to beg for help."

It was Marius speaking to him, and the old man burst out: "Can't a man offer to help you without your getting uppity? You'd think it was poison, not help, I was offering you."

"I'm doing all right, Mr. Cantrell," Al said, still with the same humble stubborn look on his face. His fingers moved among the dry goods in the box, straightening them out.

"But this is no way for a man to do—lugging a box like that from door to door."

"It's the way I have to do." Al raised his eyes to the old man's fierce look. "My father started this way."

The old man's look softened. "Tell me, Albert, how—?" he pointed to the case.

"I got ambitious, Mr. Cantrell. I tried to spread myself too thin. I borrowed money to expand the store. Ma was against it, but I went ahead by myself. I tried to make some quick money in the stock market, too. First thing I knew. . . ." He jerked his heavy shoulders and looked down at the case.

"You, too?" the old man murmured. "Are you making a living at least?"

"I'm getting by." Al could not say that Hilda was back clerking for the Coal Company again and that his mother was taking care of Bessie. "We're living with mother," he said.

The old man's hand smoothed his flat empty sleeve. "Godalmighty, Albert, how do I know if you got enough to eat?"

"We got enough." Al straightened the straps of the case and laid them out on the floor, and as he bent his head into the light, John Cantrell saw the deep narrow triangle of scalp above either brow. The rest of his hair lay thin and flat on his head.

"You're getting bald, Albert."

Al put his hand to his hair. "It's funny. Remember how thick Pa's was?"

"I remember," the old man said.

Al picked up the cover of the case.

"Here!" John said. "Wait! Let me buy something."

Al laid the cover down again. "All right. . . . But I don't want you to unless. . . . This house on the street. . . . I'm doing every one and I couldn't skip. . . ." His talk was disjointed again, and the old man, feeling a deep hard hurt, leaned forward and began to select things from the box.

"But you can't use—" Al said once.

The old man said fiercely: "There's three men in this house, and no one of them goes around naked!" He went on selecting pieces.

When he had finished, Al said: "Thank you, Mr. Cantrell," and quickly packed again.

He gave the old man change out of a ten-dollar bill, and John said: "Give my best to your mother. You tell her I'll get down to see her now that spring's come. I—" His voice faltered. I can't seem to help anyone, he thought, not even my own.

When Al's broad back went out the door, it seemed to him that it was Marius—the same thickness from shoulder to hip, the same short neck holding up the round head. And the memory of Marius flooded his mind with such force that his fingers trembled uncontrollably.

WHEN he came out of the house, Francis had stood uncertainly for a moment, and then had begun to walk slowly down towards the centre of the city. There were few people out, and his footsteps echoed flatly in the cool April night. "I'm going crazy," he said to himself. "I can't control my tongue any more." And remembering how he had hesitated outside Josie's door on Fourth of July night, he realized now how clearly he had foreseen what would happen after his surrender. I'm trying to get even with her, he thought, I'm trying to make her suffer, too. In sudden self-pity

he mumbled: "But I can't help it. She'll have to put up with me, that's all. She made me this way, and she knows it. Giving in to her got us nowhere." Had got him nothing but misery. His work gone, his money gone. "Practically living off the old man now," he mumbled again.

Yes, he had promised himself that he would make it easy for her after his surrender, but he had not kept the promise. He had tried, but he could not. His misery was eating through him, and he was beginning to take it out on her. And the way to get rid of the misery, the only way, was to go back to work for Harvey. He was close to going back, he thought, perhaps even closer than he himself realized since now he found himself on his way downtown to the union meeting. He had read the notice in the *Chronicle* just before supper, but it had not meant anything until they had shut the radio off, and then hardly aware that he was saying it, he had told them that he was going.

Why try to fool himself? If he went to the meeting, he was going with the idea of getting back somehow into harness again, Harvey Cantrell's harness, going to get the feel of things again, the feel of work and action. The notice of the meeting was just like a trigger that had fired the charge of his unrest, a charge that had been slowly building up inside him since the day he had quit working for Harvey and resigned as Councilman and tried to live the way Josie wanted him to, a charge that over the winter had begun to choke in his throat and leave a bitter taste in his mouth every time he sat down near her, even if it was only to listen to Amos and Andy on the radio, a charge that was exploding now not in a quick tearing burst but in flashes like damp gunpowder that drew his nerves tight and made him feel that he was going crazy.

And what if he did go back? Things would not be any worse between him and Josie than they were now. Yet whether they were or not, he told himself defiantly, anything would be better than to go on in this choking misery of inaction—sitting in the office all day, lining up stories for cheap crooks, for traffic-rule violators, for half-wits divorcing themselves from each other—

while all the time the deep life and the real work of the city flooded past him, leaving him high and dry. "All washed up," he mumbled, looking down the slope of the hill at the glitter of the neon lights, "unless I go back," and at once shrank away from the thought of taking away from Josie whatever peace of mind she had found in the last ten months and putting her to the slow torture once more, like stabbing her again in the same place just when the old deep wound had begun to heal.

"And what about me?" he asked himself, the slope of the hill now drawing him a little faster towards the noise and lights of the city. He had a right to heal himself as well as her. He had cut himself away from his work, and it had been like cutting his life away. He had a right to ask his life back, and if she would not give it, then he would take it.

He was close to the Fletcher Block where the union hall was. He would go in and listen, and afterwards he would think again, and then he would decide. Then he would have to decide. In the meantime. . . . He quickened his pace and found himself in the midst of low-voiced men all moving towards the union hall, and the sound of their voices and the shape of their bodies moving with purpose against the night eased his weariness, and he felt himself to be brisk and quick again with a decision to make and work to do. The men were milling around in front of the building, talking in low tight voices, but when someone said loudly: "Let's get goin', you guys," they fell quiet, and climbed the musty-smelling worn steps in a compact crowd.

The meeting had been under way only a little while when Francis said to himself: "I didn't know it was this far along. I didn't know it was this bad." The men had not come to ease themselves of their complaints by talking about them, he realized. That was all past for them. This was a meeting of minds and wills to settle on a choice of action. He looked about him with a feeling of surprise. He had thought he knew these men, knew them well, so well that he could tell what singly or in a crowd they might be expected to do. Many of the faces were familiar, many of the men he knew

by their first names, many a one had shaken his hand and promised him a vote. But that was just it, he told himself: he had always thought of them only as voters, the passive manageable men who gave themselves to him to act for them as he saw fit. Now seeing them as men able to act for themselves, for the first time he understood old John's respect for them. Yet all he could feel at this moment was fear of them, thinking: There's danger here, and violence, as the harsh strained voice of the man on the platform, his head outlined against the flag pinned to the wall behind him, threw words like sharp stones into the crowd.

Francis scanned the faces for a sign of flinching, but they were all turned towards the platform with a straining intentness so that each face was like every other face, and they seemed to make one man. He looked around uneasily, and towards the back of the room saw Phil Cantrell and another reporter from the *Chronicle* stretching their necks to hear the speaker, and he caught a glimpse of Eddie Mundy's face wearing a small set smile.

The voice from the platform said: ". . . strike!"

Francis looked among the men's faces again, but there was no shrinking, no surprise. It was the word they expected, and they took it as if they could not take any other because they would not understand any other. A black face came startlingly out of the crowd to his glance, a face shining and ungrained like black mahogany, the lips parted a little and the white teeth shining behind them, and next to it, half turned towards it, an olive-skinned face with a fleshy nose and smooth black hair, on it an expression of hard derision, the thin lips murmuring smilingly into the ear of the black close-cropped head tipped towards them. "There's danger and violence in those two," Francis said to himself, his gaze fixed upon the two faces until the black turned slowly and looked at him with opaque somber eyes, and Francis shifted his glance quickly back to the platform.

". . . know what you're votin' for," the voice said harshly. "Don't kid yourselves, it'll be a battle. Maybe you'll get a nice lead slug in the guts."

Francis felt suddenly how remote the men and the words falling among the men seemed to him. It's like watching a talkie, he thought. The words are real enough and you hear the loud voices, but the people are only shadows and you don't believe in them. Only if he was among them, for or against them, it didn't matter which, could he feel that they were alive and that he was alive, too. A man drew his life from being among other men—otherwise they seemed like shadows, and he was a shadow watching them. He sat for long minutes, his head low on his chest, until even the voice from the platform seemed to draw away and sound like a shadow's voice.

What the hell difference did it make anyway? he asked himself. Work or no work, it was all shadow-boxing. It all came to an end soon enough. Why should he struggle like a fish without wits enough to shake free of the hook? There was no need to suffer any more. He could just let go, sink down into the ooze under the tide, burrow deep, and wait in the softness till he fell apart. If old John wanted to give them the money to go around the world, in Heaven's name, why didn't he take it and go? Was this the only city he could be happy in? He could burrow his way around the world. Love, money, work—they all came down to so much mud in the end. They all turned dirty and soft when you took them into your hands. It was fine when you were young dreaming about things, trying to make your dreams come true, imagining your holding a woman, all yours, in your arms; a wallet stuffed full, all yours, in your pocket; a crowd of men, all yours, in your hand—but when you came to the feel of them, they turned soft to your touch and bitter to your taste, and you had been kidding yourself all your life.

No more for him, he thought vaguely. He would pull away from the hook and just let himself sink. He had paid himself out to Harvey, to Josie, to old John, to the boy, too—now he would pay himself back. Down in the soft black ooze—a little before his time maybe—but he'd be comfortable. If they didn't like it, they could roll him over or sit him up or walk him around or put him

on a boat burrowing his way around the world—he would stay where they put him till they moved him again. He shook himself and straightened his back in the chair. “I’m going crazy,” he said to himself, and looked down at his hands as if he expected to see them covered with soft gray mud—sewer mud, it would be, he told himself angrily.

Up on the platform, a short stubby man came forward holding a slip of paper in his hand. Francis recognized Barney Hanagan.

“. . . the result of the votin’,” Barney said. “It’s four hundred and eighteen for the strike, and seventeen against . . . seventeen scabs!” A roar boiled up into the musty air of the hall. Barney raised his hand. The roar died away to a seething mutter, and he said: “I’m askin’ the press and the visitors and the scabs to be goin’ right away. What we got to do now is private union business. . . . And if you ain’t out in five minutes, we’ll put you out.”

Francis heard the shuffling of feet towards the rear of the hall and a couple of men went down the aisle past him. He wondered if the men who had voted against the strike were showing themselves. Evidently not, he thought idly, because the crowd would perhaps throw them out on the backs of their heads.

Then the man next to him was tapping him insistently on the arm and saying as Francis turned: “Outside, buddy,” with a jerk of his head back towards the doors.

Francis started. It had been on the tip of his tongue to say: “I’m Councilman Connell,” but he was nothing, he was a piece of mud, a shadow lying on the mud. “Excuse me,” he said, and stumbled out of the row into the aisle, while all the faces he passed turned their eyes upon him, pushing him impassively towards the door and out of their way before they turned to their work again.

On his way down the stairs Eddie Mundy tapped him on the shoulder and they went out together. “I’ll walk a ways with you,” Eddie said when Francis told him he was on his way home.

They moved along in silence until Eddie asked: “Well, what do you think of that back there?”

"I don't know," Francis said slowly, "I've been out of touch. But it looks like bad trouble to me." He turned towards Eddie. "Harvey Cantrell send you there? You going to handle this thing for him?" his tone neutral and only mildly interested as if he were a stranger, but thinking that if Harvey had put this youngster on the job, there was nothing for him, nothing, unless Harvey wanted to put him back in over Mundy.

Eddie nodded. "I figure it was you got me the job. . . . Thanks."

Francis shook his head. "Harvey going to make a fight of it then?" He was puffing a little on the long slope of the hill.

Eddie laughed. "What do you think? He's turned tough and sour since last fall. . . . I think he took a fine lacing in the crash."

He looked inquiringly at Francis, and Francis said: "I wouldn't know about that. . . . Say, talking of the crash, I had a funny one today," and told Eddie about the Polack who had come into the office wanting to sue his broker.

Eddie laughed and asked how was business anyway.

"So-so," Francis said.

This was the first decent money he'd seen in quite a time, Eddie said. They were passing Sakarian's place near the top of the hill, and Eddie paused. "C'mon, and have a soda with me."

Francis smiled. "Okay. It's been a long time since I had one."

They went into the shop. Except for a couple of high school kids talking about the movie they'd just seen and a man perched on a stool at the far end of the counter, there were no other customers in the place. The big blonde behind the counter took their orders and put the tall overflowing glasses before them. Then she went to talk in a low voice to the man on the stool.

Francis, fumbling with his spoon at the floating ball of ice cream, said: "I've forgotten how to handle these things." He looked at Eddie's narrow face, and went on in a tone of carefully casual interest: "How's Harvey going to handle this business anyway?"

Eddie laid his spoon down. "He had an idea at first that the company union would hold them, but Hell!—you saw how wild

they are. Nearly half of them are walking out. They'll try to get the rest out too. Maybe pull them out by force if they don't come out of their own free will."

"You think so?"

"They'll be slugging one another in the streets," Eddie said.

Francis shook his head slowly from side to side. "It's not the way I would let it go."

Eddie nodded. "The union's out for blood. But Cantrell won't give in an inch. He cut the Works fifteen percent New Year's Day, and now he's cutting them fifteen again."

"As deep as that!"

"It's no skin off his back," Eddie said.

"No? Suppose they don't take it? How's he going to fight them?"

Eddie drank deep from his glass, and pushed it to one side. "Strikebreakers," he said. "Maybe he'll bring in professionals from outside and citizen deputies." He smiled tightly at the look on Francis's face.

"That's terrible," Francis said. "There'll be murder!"

"I tried to tell him," Eddie said. "But what the hell, I'm nothing to him."

Francis stood up. "I got to be going. . . . It's getting near my bedtime." He eased himself off the high stool.

Eddie laid a hand on his arm. "If you should see Cantrell—I mean if you were planning to come back—"

Francis buttoned his topcoat slowly. "I'm out of it, Eddie. I'm retired. Besides I wouldn't touch a thing like this with a ten-foot pole. You forgot what happened ten years ago. . . ." He stood waiting. "Coming?"

Eddie said: "I have to call Cantrell. I'll do it from here."

"Good night, then," Francis said.

There was a light on in the living room when he got home, and he went in and saw his father-in-law fast asleep in his easy chair, the light shining pinkly on his scalp through the thin white hair.

slept. But the nose still jutted boldly, and the long line of the jaw had slackened only a little. Nothing could break him—nothing, Francis thought, except death itself. A good strong old man. He shook the thin shoulder gently.

The veined eyelids opened quickly. "Oh, it's you, Francis. What time is it?"

"Late," Francis told him. "You should've been in bed a couple of hours ago. Josie'll bite your head off." He sat down on the sofa. "Weren't waiting for me, were you?"

"Thought I'd find out what you were up to." The old man smiled. "Going to union meetings and all."

"How'd you know? Does Josie—?"

"Saw it in the paper after you went. There was no other meeting mentioned, so I sort of figured that was where."

"It was some meeting." Francis scowled down at the floor. "There's going to be hell to pay in this town." He raised his head and told John what had gone on at the meeting.

When he finished, the old man asked: "When does it start?—the strike, I mean."

"Near as I can figure, day after tomorrow," Francis said. "There's a committee going to try to see Harvey tomorrow morning, but from what Mundy told me, they might just as well talk to a stone wall. Says Harvey's turned sour and hard this past year. Won't listen to anybody. . . . I'd have made him listen to me."

"What would you've told him?" the old man asked with sudden interest.

"Me? I would tell him first that these men are fighting mad," Francis said slowly. "Mad, mind you, not just complaining or grieving to each other. I tell you I got good and scared when I saw the expression on some of those faces."

"But what would you advise him?" the old man persisted. "Suppose you'd been working for him all this time and saw this thing coming?"

"I'd tell him to compromise, that's what. Better give in some than have men killed and maybe lose thousands of dollars trying

to beat the strike. It's only common sense," Francis said briskly. "The men want three things: recognition of the union, a closed shop, and no pay cut. I'd let everyone in the plant vote on the first two—I'd make a point of it's being democratic so the men couldn't kick if the vote went against them, and I'd compromise on the wage cut. Maybe take half of it. From what some of the men around me said they'll die of slow starvation if the cut goes through. . . . All I heard was 'my kids this' and 'my kids that.' . . . I don't know what's got into Harvey."

"Principles!" the old man exclaimed abruptly. "He'll cut their throats and his for his principles. I know Harvey. The plant is his, it was always his family's, it's his to run as he sees fit in his own best judgment. Believe me, if you argued all day with him, that's what it would come down to."

Francis shook his head. "That's what he says. I wouldn't be surprised if he believed it. But the real reason is simpler than that. Money. He may've dropped a fortune in the market for all we know. Many another smart banker talked himself into it. . . . He's going to get it back out of the men."

"That's hard for me to believe," the old man said doubtfully. "I'm going down tomorrow to find out."

"Josie'd never let you," Francis told him.

The old man pulled himself to his feet. "Yes, she will," he said.

Francis looked at him. "I guess she will," he said. "You going up now? I'll go up with you."

A few minutes later when he shut the door of his room behind him, Josie called his name quietly, and he went into her room and sat down on the bed, saying: "I thought you were asleep, Josie."

Her voice was muted in the darkness. "I was waiting for you to come home." Her hand groped and found his. Her thin cool fingers lay in his palm. After a moment she said: "I'm sorry, Francis."

"I know," he said, his head drooping, his body seeming to him light and unsubstantial, a shadow sitting in the dark, while their words floated a moment and dissolved about them.

Her fingers lifted and patted his palm gently.

"The meeting I went to—" He stopped. "I was a little crazy, I guess," he began again. "I thought I might be going back to work for Harvey. Did you—were you afraid of that?"

"I didn't let myself think of it, Francis. I know how hard it's been for you. The idleness, I mean. I— Are you—?"

He knew she could not finish. He said quickly: "There's no need for you to worry, Josie. I'm not. Never." He heard her breath come softly. "In the first place—listen, Josie, I have to be honest with you—he doesn't need me. I found that out. . . . But"—he let his breath go in a sigh—"I don't think I would have anyway. Even if he asked me. He's in for a strike at the Iron Works, and he means to smash it. There'll be men killed on the streets. That'll be the way of it, that's what it's going to be. I can feel the trouble coming to this city."

"You'd like to be out of it, Francis?"

"I would not want to be here when it comes," he said.

Their voices touched, mingled, faded in the darkness. The pale oblongs of the windows glimmered as if they were moving.

"Then let's take Father up on it," she said, "and go. We'll go around the world."

"Could you be leaving your Father? He's an old, old man now." He waited for her deliberation of his query, but she said at once: "If it made you happy to go, he'd be the first to urge it on me. You know that, Francis."

"Yes," he said, "that's so. . . . We'll talk in the morning then, Josie. I'm so weary now I could float away as if I was a shadow." He bent forward and kissed her.

Her hands held his face, and she whispered: "I'm glad, Francis."

"I know," he said. "Good night, Josie."

He went back into his room and began to undress. "That's that," he said to himself. "I'm done. All washed up." He had started out a few hours ago thinking of going back to work, and here he was worse off than when he started since now he knew he couldn't go back even if he wanted to. He was sitting in a darkness soft and deep like the darkness of mud. "Retired," he said aloud.

"I don't get you, Indie boy," Joe said loudly, "I don't get you at all." Behind them the voices of the men coming out of the meeting clashed in the cool air. "You must be punch-drunk."

"It wouldn't be right," Indie said.

Joe laughed. "Crap! You'd be better off fightin' for coffee-money in some cheap club than fightin' in the streets for the union and gettin' your head caved in by some copper's club."

"You think it'll be like that?"

"Maybe worse. You heard what Hanagan said about a slug in the belly. . . . An island? Jes's, they'll bury you on it. That's all the good it'll be to you. . . . You'd be better off fightin' for Smitty again."

"Is he still around?" Indie asked somberly.

Joe spat. "I met him in a joint somewhere—mind you, I was with a swell broad and he comes up lookin' like cat puke, beggin' me to put in a word with you. . . . But fightin' for him'd be better than the kind of fightin' you'll get with the union." They turned past the Bank. "I'm parked down here," Joe said. "Besides, it's all goin' out and nothin' comin' in. Sure! You'll have to live on your savings. You'll be walkin' a picket line for weeks maybe. . . . Where's your island then?"

Indie kept quiet. Since they were kids, Joe had never forgotten about the island. He didn't like Joe talking about it, but Joe meant well, he told himself. The island. . . .

Joe began again. "Listen—when Hanagan told us to scram, I didn't wait outside just to give you this stuff. You must be wise to what I'm tellin' you." He laughed. "You're not as dumb as you look, Indie." He touched Indie's arm. "Here's the new car. Some flash, huh?"

"Sure's a beauty," Indie said.

"Listen, Indie, all kiddin' aside, come in with me," Joe said. "I been mullin' the whole thing over. It was smart to quit the fight racket before you got slapped screwy, but dumb to go to work in Cantrell's foundry."

"It was just for a while," Indie said.

"Believe me," Joe went on, "if I was in town instead of layin' on the beach at Miami, I'd never of let you do it." He slowed the car and leaned to look at Indie's impassive face. "You sure got a dead pan. You stick with the union, you'll be dead all over." He laughed again. "I was mullin' it over like I was sayin'—so listen. You don't want to run out on the union—I don't blame you for that—but you hate to lose the dough while you're out on strike. That's right, huh?"

Indie nodded.

"Check!" Joe said. "So, here's a different proposition. Go out on strike—okay. Do what Hanagan and the guys want you to do—okay. But nights there'll be nothin' doin', so nights you're workin' for me. For fifty bucks a week. Get it? Fifty bucks a week! So you can get your island, an'—"

"Or be in jail," Indie said.

Joe flared up. "What do you want—a sure thing? Nothin's a sure thing in this life."

"I don't want to land in jail," Indie told him. "I don't want to even come close to it."

The car leaped along the street.

"So that's it," Joe said.

"They nearly got you last summer, didn't they?"

"Yeah, with a lousy frame-up!" Joe said. "Anything happens in this town, no matter what, an' the cops come to pick me up. They find the body of a state trooper a mile down the river and right away, 'Get Cascione,' they holler. Next thing you know they'll be blamin' me for the strike too—the stupid punks! . . . I admit they gave me quite a goin' over, but I took it. I figured out long ago, to really get somewheres, you gotta take a shellackin' once in a while." He took his right hand from the wheel and tapped Indie's knee. "That's life," he said. He gripped the wheel again. "Lucky I got that shyster Mundy in my pocket. He socked me plenty for springin' me, but he made monkeys outa the cops—monkeys! They didn't know if they were comin' or goin' by the time he finished with them. . . . But he's a bloodsucker, a leech."

"I don't want any cops after me," Indie said. "I seen enough of cops when we were kids."

The car was approaching the Flats. Against the dark of the sky the great wide bulk of the Iron Works loomed like a fortress. From one of the stacks a red flame shot up and died, leaving a brief red glow in the night.

Joe said abruptly: "They got as much chance of winnin' as they would of knockin' the walls down with their heads. . . . I'm tellin' you, Indie, don't be a sucker. Better put in with me."

"I gotta stick with the union," Indie said slowly.

"Yeah, I know," Joe said. "It's like belongin' to a gang the way we did when we were kids. The good ol' days. . . . Honest to God, Indie, you know when the gang broke up, it near broke my heart. I felt like cuttin' my throat." He stopped the car in Beverly Court. "C'mon, there's a joint here. We can get a bite to eat and some beer. My beer," he added. "There's no ether in it to blow your belly up." He led Indie through the littered yard of the tenement house and up the rickety back stairs. "Watch your step," he said.

A gas jet flickered in the narrow entry. Joe rapped sharply at the scarred door, and called: "It's Joe Cascione, Mrs. Kearns."

The door opened at once, and the tall woman said: "Glad to see you, Joe."

Joe jerked his thumb at Indie. "You know the Tiger Kid, Mrs. Kearns?"

"I seen him in many a good fight," she said. Her mouth flashed with a golden smile, and Indie nodded self-consciously. She led the way into the kitchen. A number of men were sitting around in battered chairs, nursing their drinks and talking in low tones. A small bar ran along one wall, and a stove with pans simmering on it, threw a warm smell into the room. "Al Smith'd never of stood for it," one of the men was saying. "He'da done somethin'."

"How's business, Mrs. Kearns?" Joe said. "Look, we wanna talk private."

"Fine," she said, smiling. "It can't be the cookin', so it must be

the beer." She led them into a small room off the hall beyond the kitchen. "I got stuffed peppers tonight."

"Swell! Bring us a load," Joe said, "and two big beers." He motioned Indie to sit down at the small table. "You'd be surprised the business a little place like this does. Even with the protection, she makes plenty. . . . They tell me she's puttin' her boy through college."

The door opened, and Mrs. Kearns brought in two steaming plates of dull green peppers, a plate of bread, and the beers. She got everything quickly off the tray onto the table, gave them a couple of paper napkins, and went out. They began to eat.

At length Joe pushed his plate back and sighed. "Boy, that was good. I could do with another dish. How about you, Indie?"

Indie shook his head, and drank from his beer glass.

Joe leaned forward. "You been mighty quiet, Indie. You been thinking over what I said?"

Indie said: "Gee, I don't know, Joe. I don't know at all what to say. . . . What you want me for anyway?"

"Because you're a guy I can trust," Joe told him quickly. "I know if you put in with me, it'd be all the way. You'd be levelin' all the time. Some of these punks I got workin' for me would be the first to jump me if I slipped. And these days especially I need someone who'll stick with me and back every play I make."

"Like a bodyguard," Indie said.

"Sure," Joe said. "A bodyguard. I wouldn't ask you to do any of the haulin' or stuff like that except maybe in an emergency. See?"

"But only nights?"

"Well," Joe said. "I got to be square with you, Indie. If there was an emergency—"

"Like what, for instance?" Indie asked. If it meant getting the island that much sooner, he told himself, I could put in with him. Just till I get enough. A couple thousand more. He was afraid of the strike, afraid of putting his black head forward, a target for the white man's clubs and slugs. They'd git me the first one, he

thought. But working at night for Joe . . . his face belonged to the night. In the night he was safe.

" . . . not the cops," Joe was saying. "I always fronted for my boys with the cops. I told you that leech Mundy is a smart shyster. Nope, not the cops," he repeated, sloshing the beer around in his glass, "but the competition."

"Competition?"

"Sure, like in any other business," Joe said. "Even the big shots like Cantrell have to fight competition. . . ." He leaned back in his chair. "When I started in, it was swell. It was wide open. You could get business anywhere, any time. Now it's cutthroat. Look, what happens in Chicago. . . . But, Jes's, I wouldn't mind if the competition was legitimate, you know what I mean? But there's these cheap punks that won't invest a nickel except in a Tommy gun to hijack the stuff of someone who's legitimate. That's what burns me. That's why I got to have fighters as well as workers."

"And that's why you want me?" Indie asked. "To fight?"

"You said it, Indie boy." Joe cocked his finger and said smilingly: "Bing! Bing!"

"Well, all right," Indie said. "For that much money—"

Joe came up straight in his chair. "Jes's you mean you will? Shake on it before you change your mind!" They clasped hands, and Joe said: "You're a deep one. I thought you were gonna turn me down."

Indie smiled, and shook his head.

"But you be careful in this strike," Joe told him. "You'll be no good to me with your head caved in."

"I'm not worryin'," Indie said. But he was thinking that maybe he'd better get out of town altogether. Maybe if he went to New York and talked to the real estate man himself, he could get the island cheaper. It sounded good. The man had even sent pictures of it. It belonged to a man who'd lost everything in the stock market. It was four miles off the South Carolina coast. A small house, a motor boat went with it. There were two families left on the island, Mundy had told him, who were holding up the whole deal.

They wanted more money than Indie could give. But there were trees, there was fishing, there was good land for growing things. And he would be alone. That was the important thing. But it took time to get enough to live alone on for the rest of a man's life. Two more years of work, he had figured, and now maybe even one would do it. That would be the day. Feeling suddenly happy, he smiled at Joe, and Joe said:

"Boy, don't it hurt?—I mean that smile." He went to the door and called out: "Service! Two beers." When he sat down again, he asked Indie if he knew how to use a gun. "Might not ever be necessary, but just the same—y'know what I mean?"

He had learned some in the army how to use a gun, Indie told him, and they drifted into talk about their days in the army.

THEY hardly gave him a chance to sit down before they were after him. He looked across at Irene, but she was fiddling with the radio.

Her mother said: "Shut it off now, Irene. We want to hear what Louis has to tell us."

He knew that since they had come to live with her folks, Irene had been listening to them, slowly drawing farther and farther away from him. We just got to get out of here, he thought as he faced up to the hard inquiring look in his mother-in-law's eyes.

"Well, Louis?"

"What happened, my boy?" Mr. Curtis set his cigar down carefully on the ash-stand.

Louie didn't know which one he hated most. "They're going to strike," he said uncomfortably, not meeting their eyes as if he himself were responsible for the strike.

"That's a fine thing!" Mrs. Curtis said.

"They ought to be whipped," her husband asserted. "They don't know when they're well off."

"Nearly all the men voted for it," Louie said.

"Well!" Mrs. Curtis jerked her head at him. "I hope you had enough sense to vote against it."

He shook his head. "I voted for it, too," he said slowly.

Mr. Curtis affected not to understand. "I beg your pardon, Louis," he said elaborately, his eyes following the curling smoke of the cigar, "did I hear you say that you had voted for the strike?"

Louie nodded, and looked at Irene, but she would not meet his glance.

"May I ask why?"

"Well, it just seemed to me that we—the strikers, I mean—are right. That's all."

"Oh, that's all. Just like that," Mrs. Curtis said.

"I always thought," her husband went on, "that Mr. Cantrell was more than fair to his workers. Always. It's a shame that some wild-eyed radicals could come into the city and tell American workers what to do."

"No one told us," Louie said.

"Who's behind the leaders? That's what I always ask in a thing like this. Some one's paying them to stir up trouble, you can depend on that. Take it from an older man, my boy. I know what I'm talking about." He leaned aside to tap the ash off his cigar, and his bald spot gleamed under the fringed lamp.

"These are all fellers that work in the plant," Louie said stubbornly.

"And when, may I ask, if you're not betraying any secrets, is this strike scheduled to start?"

"Day after tomorrow. There's a committee appointed to see Mr. Cantrell tomorrow, if he'll see them and—"

"He should push them right out," Mrs. Curtis exclaimed. "The nerve of them! He's given them work all these years and now!—it makes me furious." Her head jerked from side to side.

"And if he won't listen," Louie went on, "we're going out day after tomorrow." A long time ago he had run away when the trouble began. Run like a scared rabbit, begging Dave Bandler to hide him. If he ran away now, he would hate himself as long as he lived. He would not be able to look at himself in the mirror while he was shaving without getting sick with the desire to cut his

throat. If it wasn't for Irene and the baby. . . . One thing he knew—he was sick of being whipped. A man could stand just so much. If he kept on standing it, if he kept on cringing and crawling and crying, he was not a man any more. Simple as A, B, C, he thought. But it had taken him a long time to find it out. Too long.

"Does your father belong to this union? Will he be striking, too?" Mr. Curtis asked.

Louie grinned suddenly. "He nearly had a fit when they asked him to join. . . . I told them they were crazy to go after him."

"He's got too much sense!" Mrs. Curtis said, glaring at him. He avoided her look and watched Irene, but she kept on with her knitting as if no one were in the room. It's time she put in her two cents' worth, too, he thought bitterly.

His mother-in-law was still glaring at him. "Of course, I realize that you've got such weighty matters on your mind that you can't listen to Mr. Curtis or to your own father even. But let me remind you that you're living in our house—"

"Sure," Louie said. His voice rose. "Because the Works don't pay me enough to have a decent place of my own. And that's why I'm striking."

Mr. Curtis stopped him, his hand with the cigar flung up. "Now, Louis, no need to get excited. Let's talk this over like sensible people."

"I'm not excited," Louie told him, "I'm just stating facts."

"Facts!" his mother-in-law snorted.

"Besides we've paid our way here," Louie said in a lower tone.

Mr. Curtis said: "We don't begrudge your living with us, Louis. But naturally, any man with pride would not want his wife and child to be supported by her parents. It's a proper feeling. . . . There's no need to—"

His wife interrupted him. "Who's going to support them when he's out on strike, that's what I'd like to know? Surely, Mr. Cantrell is not going to pay him while he's out with those hoodlums trying to wreck his business. I should say not!"

His bitterness was not for them, it was for Irene. Why didn't she say something? She could back him up, or at least give him one look to encourage him. He wondered what they'd been saying to her while he was at the meeting. They would never understand why she had married a poor snot like him instead of some cigar-smoking stuffed shirt like her old man. He would bet they worked on her every minute he was out of the house. And now they were working on her right in front of him. In a way the strike was giving them the break they wanted. They'd like to throw him out on his ear, maybe get Irene to divorce him. And if they worked on her long enough. . . . He should never have given into her about living with her folks after he got cut in January. She had said it was for the baby's sake, and he had given in because it was making her sick to worry about the kid. He should've held out, the baby would've been all right. Suddenly he felt the creeping strangling fear, the fear of being whipped in a dark cellar seize him and choke him. "What you say?" he asked, with a vague look as if he had just waked with a start from a troubled sleep.

"You understand very well what I'm saying," Mrs. Curtis said. Her bosom lifted as if she were going to throw herself at him.

Christ, how she hates me! he thought.

"Now let's be calm about this. . . ." Fred Curtis turned towards Louie. "As I was saying, I know you will want to consider carefully the point Mrs. Curtis has just brought up. I was going to mention it myself." He drew upon his cigar. "As I understand it from the newspaper, not all the men are going out on this strike?"

"No," Louie said, "only about half."

"Well," Mr. Curtis said, "the point I'm getting at is that if you want to keep your self-respect by providing for your wife and child, you'll naturally want to do your share towards—uh—towards the household expenses."

Louie nodded. He could see what was coming. He uncrossed his legs and set his feet flat on the floor. A shiver of wild hatred went through him. The voice beyond the rich cigar smoke went on. He saw Mrs. Curtis's head going briskly up and down. She

saw it coming, too. Only Irene sat with her fingers moving firmly over her knitting.

"So that," Mr. Curtis said, "if you were to stay at work—mind you, Louis, as a loyal employee it would be entirely proper and fitting—there would be no need for you—uh—to reproach yourself about providing for Irene and little Bobby." He sat back and waved away the cigar smoke that eddied in front of him. "Think it over, and—"

"I don't have to think it over," Louie said. "I'm going out on strike."

While her parents stared at Louie, Irene got up, and said: "It's too late to argue, and you're not getting anywhere. It's bedtime for me." For the first time, she spoke to Louie: "Coming up?"

He jumped from the chair. "Sure, Irene. Sure. I'm tired. It's late."

She went to her father and mother and kissed them.

"Good-night," Louie said. He followed Irene up the stairs and into their room.

She turned on him as soon as the door closed. "Well, you were certainly diplomatic, I must say!"

"You sound just like your mother," he told her with sudden bitterness at her tone.

She sat down on the edge of the bed. "I never knew you to be stubborn like this before," she said more mildly.

"I have to be stubborn about this." He took off his coat, hung it over the back of a chair, and began to work on the knot of his tie. "How's the baby?"

"Just wonderful," she said. "You should have seen him splashing when I bathed him this morning."

He sat down and began to unlace his shoes. When he raised his head again, he saw that she was crying. "Irene!" he exclaimed. He sat down beside her on the edge of the bed and drew her shaking body close, feeling her hot tears against his shoulder. "Irene, darling," he said. "Don't cry."

When her crying stopped, she said: "What are we going to do,

Louie? What are we going to do?" She blew her nose. "You don't know how it hurt me when you and the folks were fighting like that. Hating each other!"

"It isn't of my making, Irene," he said. "You know that, don't you?"

"How can you say that? You're the one that's going out on strike, not they."

He pulled away from her. "So that's the way of it," he said.

"Wait, Louie," she said, "don't get mad—I never saw you like this before. So touchy, I mean. You've always been so good, so sweet-tempered. It's almost like talking to a stranger now."

"What do you want of me?" he asked heavily. "What do you want me to do?"

"Ah, that's my old Louie speaking," she said.

He waited for her to go on, still sitting awkwardly away from her.

She said rapidly: "Don't do it, Louie. Don't go out on strike." Her eyes brimmed with tears again. "Not because they don't want you to, Louie. But for my sake and the baby's. Please, Louie!"

"I'd be the worst kind of a traitor if I didn't. You know that," he said.

"You don't realize what it'll mean to us if you do," she told him.

"What?" he said, "what will it mean?"

"Couldn't you tell, Louie? Father said before you came home that he would have to ask you to leave if you were going with the strikers."

"All right," he said. "Okay. If that's the way they feel, we'll get out. I didn't want to come here in the first place."

Suddenly she was crying again with harsh dry sobs. "Where'll we go? How will we live? If you're not working, where's the money to come from?"

"We got some in the bank," he said.

She laughed in mockery. "Sixty-seven dollars and eight cents! How long would that last? . . . Why, you talk like a baby!"

"We'd get by somehow. We did before."

"You had a job before," she said quickly. "And if you went alone, you'd never see me and the baby. They'd never let you in once you left."

"They want me to go," he said. "I know. They'd like to split us apart. Maybe get you to divorce me. I bet they already mentioned it to you."

She flared up. "They have not! Not a word!"

"That's what they're working on just the same," he said. "They always hated me for being a poor sucker, working in a factory, instead of a stuffed shirt, stuffed full of bonds and mortgages. Not good enough for you, they always thought. . . . You should've heard the going over they gave me the afternoon the baby was born. According to them—"

She interrupted him. "Louie! Never mind them. I don't care what they think, what they say. It's you I care about. Stay, Louie. Stay so we can be together. I'll die if we have to separate. Who'll take care of you?"

"I don't think the strike'll last long," he said feebly.

She caught the surrender in his voice. "But I'm afraid, Louie. Afraid what'll happen. Suppose it does last a long time? I'll go crazy sitting here, not seeing you and worrying about you—wanting you. If you love me—"

"Yes," he said abruptly, "all right. You win."

She clasped his head against her breast. "I'm glad, Louie. . . . I was so frightened!" She kissed his hair, and when he turned his face towards her, kissed his mouth.

"Time for bed," he said sullenly, drawing away.

When they were in bed, he said: "I just thought—suppose Mr. Cantrell and the strike committee get things straightened out tomorrow?"

"That would be wonderful," she said.

"If there's no strike then," he went on, "will you move out of here? We'll find a little place somewhere."

"I suppose so, Louie," she said with a sigh. "If you want to."

Sick at heart, he heard the reluctance in her voice.

Then she said briskly: "Fall asleep, Louie. It's late," and turned on her side away from him. For a long time he lay in the darkness, looking up at the ceiling and listening to her soft even breathing.

"THAT's a coupla big shots you just waited on," Smitty said sourly to her. "Punks rollin' in dough, and here I am. . . ."

"You startin' that again?" Lily said.

"Whatsa matter?" he snarled. "Can't you stand the sound of my voice no more? . . . Here I been hangin' around for weeks tryin' to see you. Maybe you want me to croon like Rudy Vallee?"

"Fat chance," she said. She looked up at the clock. "You better go now. Paul'll be back any minute from his lodge. He's vice-Grand Ruler now, y'know."

"I suppose you're proud of him, huh? The greasy Turk!"

"You don't have to talk that way about him," she said. "He never done nothin' to you."

"Nothin' but get me in jail and steal my girl away from me," he said dramatically.

She frowned back at the high-school kids. "Sh! Do you have to talk so loud? Besides that was a long long time ago. You better get a new one." She grinned. "A nelephant never forgets!"

"Go ahead—crack wise," he said. "That's not the way you talked all last summer when I was in the dough. Jes's, you broads are all alike. If a guy's in the money, you're all over him. If he's flat, you wouldn't spit on the best part of him."

She flared up. "That ain't true, Jack! What did I ever get outa you when you had money? Besides, I gave you plenty myself when you was up against it."

"Sure! Throw it up to me. . . . Make me out a bum because you slipped me a few lousy bucks once!"

"It was more than that," she said. "Lots more."

His voice rose and thinned to a whine. "What's come over you, Lil? I can't un'erstand it. Last summer you were gonna kill me or somethin' if I didn't take you away from here."

"I don't know, Jack," she told him. "All summer I just lived for

the day when you and me could go off together like we promised each other. Honest to God, I was walkin' on air all the time, just waitin' for Christmas so we could go." She paused, and laid her hand on her breast. "Then when you lost your dough in the stock market, and we couldn't go—" she shook her head—"I don't know. Somethin' died inside here. Everything turned to ashes like."

His laugh barked out. "You been seein' too many movies. You sound like you thought you was Garbo."

"I loved you, Jack," she told him mournfully.

"Don't give me that crap," he said. "It was my dough and the big times we were gonna have! That's what you were steamed up about."

"It's a lie!" She looked up at the clock. "You better go if you don't want him to find you here."

"Sure! I'm just a bum to you now. Kick me out like you would a dog!" His voice went up again. "You can't do this to me, Lily. Not after what we been to each other."

"Sh!" she said, frowning. "What you want me to do, Jack?"

"You know," he said. "Do I have to write it for you? . . . I gotta blow outa here, outa this God-forsaken dump. Y'gotta help me."

She drew back. "You beggin' for money again, huh?"

"Beggin'! I oughta cut your heart out, you bag!"

She put her hand up to her hair and patted it. "That kinda talk'll get you nowhere. An' if you hang around much longer, Paul'll murder you if he finds you here." She waved, and called sweetly to the two high-school kids: "G'night!" as they went to the door.

"Jes's, Lil, how can you toss me around like this? I gotta feeling you like to see me squirm."

Her plump hand smoothed her hair. "You're very much mistaken, Jack. I don't like to see nobody suffer."

"Then how c'n you toss me around like this?"

She looked at the puffy unshaven face, the soiled shirtcollar, and food-spotted tie. "Why don't you pull yourself together. Jack, and get a job? You got a good personality, but you don't

make the most out of it. I was readin' a narticle the other day. . . ."

"Screw your readin'! . . . You gonna help me or not?"

"It wouldn't be fair to Paul." She looked past him dreamily. "You and me'll have to part, Jack." She laid her hand on her bosom again, the fingers widespreading. "It hurts me here. After all these years."

He sat motionless, staring down at the mottled marble counter.

"And don't you call me a bag either! Who do you think you are anyway to call me names? . . . Even that nigger threw you over."

He raised his head so that she could see the tears on his cheeks.

"Bawlin' won't help you none, either. You and me are finished, Jack. You made a sucker outa me all these years, bleedin' me for money and lyin' to me, but I don't hold no grudge against you." She smoothed her hands slowly down over her hips. "Here's some people comin'," she told him. "If Paul should walk in now. . . ."

He slid off the stool. "Y'dirty whore!" he said in a choked whisper. "I'll cut your heart out for this!"

She laughed shrilly. "Get out, you bum! Dirty, stinkin' bum! If I never see you again, it'll be too soon." She went, smiling sweetly, towards the group seating themselves at the lower end of the fountain.

The door crashed as Jack went out.

"What's the matter with him?" one of the men asked.

"Some tramp fulla moonshine," she said. "I guess he thought this was a speakeasy." She laughed. "I'm glad you folks came in."

"Looks like he'd been drinkin' that Jamaica ginger. . . . Isn't it terrible?" the woman said. She shuddered delicately. "I'll have a banana-split, I guess. . . ."

If he had a gun, he would've shot her right through the heart, Smitty told himself, walking aimlessly down town. Beneath his choking hatred of her, self-pity flooded and filled his eyes with tears. What had happened to him? He couldn't figure it—on top of the world one minute, down in the gutter the next. He had bled himself dry of every nickel to hand over to the broker, he had run

around like he was crazy getting fights for the nigger, he had done everything he could to make Lily happy, and then sock! just when everything was breaking right, the market cleans him, the nigger, after all he done for him, gives up fighting, and Lily, the whore, practically spits in his face.

"Who is she callin' a bum?" he said to himself. If he could get hold of a gun, he'd case the ice cream parlor, and stick it up, bang the Turk and Lily over the head, and blow out of town fast. Or if he could get the nigger again, he could figure some con game to take him for plenty because if it wasn't for him, the nigger would still be piling scrap-iron in the Jew's junkyard. But when he thought of the cruel black face close to his, the dense white eyeball striking him like a stone, he shivered away from the thought of Indie.

Jesus, he had no place to turn to, he didn't have a friend in the world. Tears filled his eyes again. If only she had slipped him a sawbuck—he had depended on it for a sure thing—he could get by for a few days until he got a break. He stopped under a street light on the slope of the hill and slowly counted the change in his pants-pocket. A dollar and eight cents. He fished in his watch pocket under the dollar watch and pulled out a two-dollar bill folded very small. A hard-luck deuce. Three dollars and eight cents, a dollar watch, and half a pack of Luckies. When the dough was gone, he was all pooped out. He could go take the gas pipe.

Where was the fat wallet full of broker's letters and ten-dollar bills, where was the green gabardine suit, the blue-striped shirts, where was the snappy roadster, where the hot dame, where were they, together with the promises of a fatter wallet, a classier suit, a flashier shirt, a snappier roadster, a hotter dame? Where were the beers, the whiskies, the steaks, the lobsters?

Gone, all gone, the promise of tomorrow, the happy days, stolen away from him by the Wall Street bastards. They were the ones that had bled him and thousands more like him,—regular guys, native-born American citizens, taken to the cleaners by the Wall Street bastards. They were sitting pretty, they had his dough, they

had the dough of thousands of other regular guys, they had nothing to worry about, riding around in their big Cadillacs with show girls, swilling up champagne, living off the fat of the land, while he and the other regular guys had to go begging for a handout like lousy tramps instead of American citizens. It ain't right, he told himself, we ought to take it away from them. What the hell kind of gover'nment we got that lets the citizens get robbed?

Ahead of him he saw men coming out of the Fletcher Block, their talk loud and excited. He quickened his step, and at the fringe of the crowd he spotted Maxie Voorhees standing in the glow of the street lamp and grabbed him by the arm.

"Hi, Smitty," Maxie said. "Goin' down?" Over his shoulder he called: "See you in the mornin', Louie."

As they moved away from the crowd, Jack asked: "What's up, Maxie? What's goin' on?"

"Plenty," Maxie told him. "They're gonna tear this town apart, that's what. It's a strike down at the Works. They just voted it. There's gonna be broken heads, I figure," he said excitedly. "Jes's, Hanagan and the rest got it all planned out like we was in the army. This place back here's the headquarters where the pickets report. They're even bringin' in cots for guys to sleep in. And if someone gets hurt they'll have the beds for them, too. . . . I got the Jesus scared out of me almost."

"Is the nigger gonna be in it, too?" Jack asked. "You know—my pug."

"Yeah, he was there at the meetin'," Maxie said. "He'll have to do some real fightin' now. Rough an' tumble. And for nothin'."

"I hope the black bastard gets his head caved in."

Maxie nodded. "Maybe you'll get your wish. . . . If the scabs and our guys start sockin' each other in the streets, maybe somebody'll lay a piece of pipe over his head."

"No kiddin'! You think it'll go that far?"

"I told you to read the papers," Maxie said. "The cops are layin' in riot guns, the paper says."

"How about you, Maxie? You gonna be in it?"

Maxie took his arm and gently pressed it. "You'd like to see me laid out cold, too, huh? . . . Is there anybody you know you don't want to see beat up?"

"Ah, don't take it that way," Jack said. "I don't wish nobody hard luck. . . . I got enough of my own." He went on hurriedly, thinking that perhaps he wouldn't get another opening: "B'lieve me, I got some lousy breaks lately. But things are pickin' up. . . ." He plunged. "You couldn't let me have a sawbuck for a couple days, huh, Maxie? I'll give it back with a deuce tied to it." He looked up eagerly at the other.

Maxie shook his head slowly from side to side, without saying anything.

"A fin, then." Jack realized he'd hurried it, and cursed himself for not waiting for a better chance. He could have bought Maxie a couple of beers, a couple of shots of shine, and loosened him up a little first.

"Save your breath," Maxie told him.

"You wouldn't help a guy if he was dyin' in front of you!"

"You could go to work. Did you ever think of that?" Maxie said. "As long as I knew you, you was always lookin' for a meal ticket. Did you ever try earnin' your own livin'?—standin' over a millin' machine eight hours a day, f'r instance?"

"Will you lay off me?" Jack said. "When I had it, you an' the rest of the guys were all over me, lappin' up my booze, playin' poker up in my room. When I'm up against it, you're jumpin' on me with both feet. . . . Lemme take a deuce then."

Maxie wagged his head again. "Not even a nickel, Jack. I got a wife and kids to take care of, and they don't pay you when you're out on strike because they gotta pay the scabs. . . ." He laid his hand lightly on Smitty's arm. "You could get some money scabbin', Jack. Good money. Scabs don't have to work hard, and they even give 'em a gun so they'll be safe. Maybe." He caught Smitty's quick look. "O' course, there's always a chance that some guy on the line might feel a little sore about you takin' the bread out of his mouth, and he might beat your face down to your collar, but"—

he clicked his tongue—"that's the chance you take when you're out for the dough and don't give a good Goddamn how you get it."

They stopped in front of the Bank. "I gotta catch a trolley here," Maxie said.

"Whaddya take me for?" Jack said loudly. The trolley curved into the Square and bore down upon them. "Whaddya take me for?" he repeated. "Think I'd—"

Maxie stepped off the curb. "Sure, you would," he said over his shoulder. "You an' all the rest like you—the hot sports, the wise guys, the regular guys, the easy-money guys—you'll all be there. I could see it in your face the second I said it." The car was slowing down. "But if I meet you on the line, Smitty, I'll beat your face in. I'm tellin' you." The car stopped, and he got on.

"Screw you," Jack muttered. Easy money, he thought as he set off for his flophouse. He pulled himself erect and walked briskly, snuffing up the warm spring air. Easy money. . . .

STOLIDLY, the fabrikoid case bumping occasionally against his legs, Al walked towards his mother's house. His legs ached. If he could only get a little bit ahead of the game, he was thinking, he would buy a small car and do his peddling from that. Instead of having customers come to the store, instead of waiting for them to come, he'd be bringing the store to them. Why not? But when he thought of the store, its bright windows covered with a film of soap on which kids had scribbled dirty words, its wide aisles dark and dusty, its showcases empty, his heart turned over with anguish.

It would have been all right, he told himself, if only the new store had gone. But the old store, too—that was what hurt, hurt deep so that he could hardly bear to think of it, but could not stop thinking of it, remembering the chatter of people on a busy Saturday morning rising up to the balcony while he talked to his father; remembering his feelings when he first sat in his father's old oak chair in front of the big rolltop desk; remembering the salesmen coming in with their cases and their glib talk about Philly and St. Joe and how fast this item and that item was moving, and the girls

coming up respectfully to him with vouchers to sign, and arguing with Archie Kendall the advertising man from the *Chronicle* about a decent layout for an ad; remembering the oldtimers like old Mrs. Norton who was always telling him about the first day the store was opened and claimed to have been his grandfather's first customer when she was a little girl; remembering the annual outing of the salespeople and his father, red-faced and smiling, handing out the prizes; remembering his father teaching him how to make out the bank-deposit slips; remembering selling shoes, with the girls saying: "That feels fine, Al. But what else you got?", remembering and grieving while his legs ached and the black fabri-koid case was all that he had now to show for all the worry and work and sweat his grandfather and his father had put themselves to in making a place for themselves in the city.

His mind turned over and over the memories and the regrets. If he could only lay his hands on a little money, he and Hilda could open a hole in the wall somewhere. He could start again the way his grandfather had started— "It was just a hole in the wall, that's all it was, Albert," old Mrs. Norton used to tell him with her hand on his sleeve while he wondered how he could get away from her, and his father leaned over the railing of the balcony and grinned at his plight. He could make a new start. All he needed was the chance, and he'd pull back to where he had been before. Before he died, he'd have the store again as big as it had been when he took it over. Bigger. He took a deep breath. If his grandfather and his father could do it, he could do it, too. It was the same country, the same city, and they still offered a man the same opportunity. If a man was willing to work—well, even in bad times, his father had come through. And so could he. Yes, so could he. He squared his shoulders and set his feet down more firmly on the sidewalk. At the corner of Trevor Street he paused, and suddenly reflected that he had not seen Dave since just after the store closed. He hesitated on the curb a moment, and then turned off towards Dave's house.

As he followed Dave into the living room, he saw with sur-

prise that the rug was rolled up, the pictures were down and stacked against the wall, and there was a smell of dust and moth-balls in the house.

"I'm glad you dropped in, Al," Dave said. "I was just thinking of getting in touch with you."

Al sat down and stretched his legs with a sigh.

"How're things, Al? You making a go of it?"

"It's a struggle," Al said, "but I'm getting by." He looked around the room. "You moving, Dave? Kind of sudden, isn't it?"

"I'm moving all right," Dave said. "But it's not sudden." He stared down at the floor. "We're going to Palestine."

"You are, Dave! For good?"

Dave nodded slowly. "Remember, Al, I told you once I was thinking of getting my own hospital? . . . Well, it flopped. It was just a pipe-dream. I'm licked. So I'm going to Palestine."

"Harriet?"

"I promised her if the hospital thing didn't go through. . . ."

"And she's holding you to it?"

"Don't blame her, Al," Dave said. "It's me, too. I'm ready to go, I guess. But I don't know. Last few months I've been feeling like hell is all I know."

"I can guess how you feel, Dave."

"We both got plenty to cry about, Al. You took a hard knock, too," Dave said.

"But Harriet wouldn't hold you to it if you didn't want to go."

"I don't know what I want," Dave said. "Harriet keeps saying I'll be happier than I ever was in my life once we're settled there. . . . And my folks are just tickled to death we're coming. My father wrote me a letter—well, I wish you could've seen it." He let his hands fall. "But I don't know. I don't know what I want. All I know is I wanted to be free in this country to do my work, as much as I wanted, to make me happy. And I haven't been free. So I'm going where I think, where Harriet thinks, I'll be happy."

Al shook his head. "You ought to stick it out here, Dave," he said. "You ought to stick it out. This is your hometown. I can't see you happy away from it. You always talked as if it was the only place in the world for you."

Dave said harshly: "I've been practicing here ten years now, and I haven't got anywhere: I don't know why, unless it's what Harriet says—that the Jews just don't belong and never will belong. God knows I wanted to. . . . That's the truth, Al."

"We all got our troubles, Dave," Al said vaguely. "When you leaving?"

"Next week—Wednesday. But I can hardly believe it. It doesn't seem me that's going away from this city, away from this country. It's like a stranger doing all this packing. When I was a kid, I never thought . . . I'm an emigrant, that's what I am, going from my own country to a strange country. It's a damn funny feeling is all I can say."

"I hate to see you go, Dave. We'll miss you and Harriet."

"Thanks, Al," Dave said moodily. "We'll miss you too. . . . I can't understand it!" he burst out. "Here I am thirty-seven years old, I should be settled down, and instead"—he looked around at the bare walls—"I'm starting all over again."

"Well, after all, it's your own people," Al said.

"I suppose so," Dave said. "But I always felt that my own people—well, that I was among my own people right in this city. I mean all the people in this city, all the people in this country." He shook his head heavily. "But I guess maybe I was kidding myself along. I guess all that stuff about this being a free country. . . . Well, it's free for the right people, I guess—not for a lousy Yid, a Jew bastard like me." After a moment he forced a smile. "I'll be bawling in a minute, I pity myself so hard."

They sat in silence a little, Al with his eyes fixed on the black case at his feet. At length he sighed and got up. "I got to get along, Dave. I'm pooped out, my legs are falling off me. . . . We'll see you before you go?"

Dave nodded. "We'll get together." He followed Al out to the door, said good-night, and came back, yawning with weariness and trying to swallow the bitter taste in his throat.

When Al got home, his mother came into the hall to meet him. "A Mr. Mundy's been waiting to see you," she said. "How'd things go tonight, Albert?"

"All right," he said. "Not bad."

In the living room Eddie Mundy came forward from the chair by the window. "I'm sorry to say I've been keeping your mother up," he said.

Al shook hands with him. "You're not going to serve some papers on me, are you?" He smiled uneasily. "Because it wouldn't do any good if you did."

Eddie laughed. "No, no. Nothing like that."

"I'll leave you to your talk," Emily Schaeffer said. "If you'll excuse me—good-night." She went out, small and erect, and the two men sat down.

"How's it going, Schaeffer?" Eddie asked.

"Tough. Very tough," Al said.

"I'm not going to beat around the bush," Eddie said. "I got no time. I got a proposition for you. . . ."

"Business?" Al's eyes lighted up, and he hitched his chair forward.

"In a way," Eddie said. "Listen: there's going to be a strike at the Iron Works, and the strikers are making all kinds of threats about burning down the plant, about murdering the men who are not going out on strike."

Al whistled softly. "No kidding!"

Eddie nodded. "And the reason I've come to you is the reason I'm talking to some of the other men in the Legion Post: to ask you to volunteer as a special deputy for the duration of the strike to help protect private property and the lives of citizens. . . . Now wait a minute," he added quickly as he saw the doubt in Al's eyes, "let me finish. You're not going to be asked to do any fighting. The strikers are just making threats, trying to

bull their way into what they want. . . . The point is the management wants to show them that the Works are prepared for them."

Al looked puzzled. "How about the police?"

"The police'll be there, protecting public property. What we want is men on the grounds of the plant itself. Of course," Eddie went on easily, "when I say volunteer work, I don't mean you'll work for nothing. As a matter of fact, I just talked to Mr. Cantrell himself on the phone. And he's empowered me to offer ten dollars a day to the men who'll do the work. . . . What we'd like to see is a citizen's committee to protect American rights in this strike. That's what it amounts to."

"But there's plenty of men in the Post who'll be among the strikers. . . ."

"What of it?" Eddie said. "What difference does it make anyway? This isn't official business, Schaeffer. This is a matter for private individuals. I'm talking to men who got a sense of responsibility and good judgment. That's all. I came to see you because you're vice-commander and your joining up with us would carry some weight with the others. Frankly speaking, that's why you're one of the first I'm talking to. But, of course, if for one reason or another, you can't see your way clear—that's okay with me. There's plenty of others would be glad of the chance to pick up ten dollars a day just for standing around the Works."

"I know," Al said. "I know. . . . But don't rush me. I want a little time to think it over." Ten dollars a day—seventy a week. "It's good money," he said absently.

"In these days many a man would jump at it, no questions asked," Eddie put in swiftly. He rose to his feet. "Well, what do you say?"

"I'll let you know tomorrow," Al said, frowning. "I don't—"

"Look," Eddie told him, "if you want the job, be at my office at ten tomorrow morning. If not, don't bother. All I'm asking is just keep what I've told you under your hat for a day or so. At least, till the strike begins."

"When will it?" Al asked.

"Day after tomorrow," Eddie said. "Unless the men come to their senses. . . . The damn fools, striking in tough times like these!"

"I got to think it over," Al said.

Eddie picked up his hat. "Well, I hope to see you tomorrow, Schaeffer."

"Maybe," Al said. He took Eddie to the door, put out the lights in the living room, and went upstairs.

As he went by his mother's room, she called to him, and he went in. She was sitting propped up against the pillows of the bed, with a book face down on her knees. "That's a hard young man you were talking to, Albert. What's he want?"

"There you go," he told her, "passing judgment before you know anything about him."

"I know about him," she said. "I read his name in the paper when that bootlegger was on trial for the murder of that policeman. He was the bootlegger's lawyer."

"What of it?" Al said. "That's his business. That's what a lawyer does—defend people."

"All right," she said, "don't be so touchy, for Heaven's sake. . . . Now tell me what he wanted with you."

He wanted to tell her that it was none of her business, that he was thirty-six years old now, that she had no right to butt into his affairs. He lowered his eyes.

"Well, Albert?"

He told her, looking past her at the pattern of the wallpaper behind the bed, what Eddie had said to him. "And it's confidential," he finished.

"It's just what I would expect of his kind," she said. "Doing another man's dirty work! Sneaky! . . . I'm glad you got rid of him so quick."

"It's a lot of money," he said.

"Albert! You're not thinking of doing it?"

"I'm thinking it over," he said. "I could use the money. . . .

I'm sick of peddling. I'd rather have a hole in the wall than drag that case around all day, knocking on doors, having people look at you as if you were a crook while you stand begging on their doorstep."

"Then you'd better think hard," she said. "Think of your father. What side would he be on?"

"It's not a question of taking sides."

"All right then," she asserted. "It isn't. Stay out of it, stay away from it. Your father got killed by taking sides. Have you forgotten?"

"Nothing. I've forgotten nothing," he said. "He took the wrong side, that's what. If he hadn't, I wouldn't be walking the streets day and night the way I am."

She sat erect. "How can you be such a fool, Albert! Blaming your dead father for your troubles. . . . If you'd had more sense a year ago, you wouldn't be where you are now."

"Sure! Throw it up at me! Blame me because I was ambitious, because I was trying to get ahead. Did I commit some kind of crime? You'd think so from the way you talk."

She lay back on the pillow. "I can't fight you, Albert. I'm not strong enough to fight you. And I know no matter what I say, you'll do what you want to do."

"A man should think for himself, shouldn't he? Didn't Pa?"

She nodded slowly, and closed her eyes.

"I'm going to bed," he said. He leaned over her and kissed her cheek. "I'm sorry, Ma," he mumbled. "I don't mean to hurt you, you know that."

"I know, Albert." She opened her eyes. "Don't go a minute yet. . . . There's a simple way of settling all this."

"What?" he asked. "Tell me how?"

She said slowly: "I've got some money put away. Not much, but enough to give you a fresh start. . . . I want you to take it. Think what it'll mean—"

"No, Ma," he said quickly. "No. I can't. I can't take any more chances. I got to fight this thing out alone. All by myself. I got

confidence I can make a place for myself again." He thought of Dave Bandler. He said: "If I took the money from you, suppose the business didn't go? Suppose I lost the money, the way I lost everything once already?"

"Albert—"

"No, Ma—wait. I saw Dave Bandler tonight, and I lost all my respect for him in five minutes. Yes, I didn't realize it till now. He's quitting, he's going away, going to Palestine because he couldn't get what he wanted in this country. He's blaming the country, see? And he should be blaming himself."

"I'm tired, Albert," his mother told him. "I can't talk any more. All I know is, you're being stupidly stubborn."

"Now listen, Ma—"

"I hope, I pray you won't do as that Mundy asks. Tell me you won't." She waited a long moment. When he shook his head, she closed her eyes to hide the sudden tears.

"I can't promise anything, Ma. . . . Not until I think it over at least."

"Good-night, Albert."

"Good-night, Ma. I hope I haven't upset you." Her head moved on the pillow, but she did not answer, and after a moment he rose and switched off her light and went softly out.

LOUIE DAVIS walked slowly along through the low-lying morning mist. The sunlight was flooding over the housetops, and from the trees over the street came a light fresh smell of spring. He walked slowly because he was frightened. What he had to do when he got to the Works, he told himself, was to walk straight along, not to listen if anybody tried to pick a fight with him—walk straight along up the street and through the gate marked EMPLOYEES. That was all there was to it.

He turned around when he came to the corner and he saw Irene's hand waving. He waved back and kept on towards the trolley stop. He usually walked to work every morning, but he had decided to take a trolley down today because the trolley

passed within a block of the Works and it meant that much less to walk in case—in case he ran into some of the men, the men who were striking, lying in wait for the men who were not striking. But he would not run away from them. All his life he had run away—he could not run away any more. If he got beat up, he would not care. . . .

The trolley came along, and he got on it. It was crowded, and he looked at the men furtively, searching for a face he knew, yet hoping he would not see one. The car pounded down the hill, and most of the men did not speak to one another, did not look at one another. Nearly all had the same anxious desperate look on their faces. They're all scabs! Louie suddenly realized because one of the men held tightly rolled in his hand last night's *Chronicle* folded over to the ads where the Iron Works had promised to "MEN WANTED, Good Work at Good Wages Under Open-shop Conditions."

And he?—he was a scab, too. He hated himself and the men around him. We should all be killed, shot like yellow dogs, he thought. And I should be the first one. He was standing on the crowded rear platform, looking out of the windows at the tracks running away behind the car, the sun glinting on the shiny steel. His heart began to pound, and his breath came quick and shallow. He felt as if he were suffocating, the way he had felt in France when his battalion moved up to the line in the blackness of the night and he had to roll into the wet ditch on the side of the road when the batteries began searching the road with shrapnel and he could feel the bracket of the gunfire drawing tighter while he and the rest tried to burrow face downward into the slimy mud to get away from the steel fingers that searched to pick open the tight-drawn muscles of their backs. And he felt like jumping then and there from the car and getting off into the country somewhere where he could lie down on the fresh green grass and look up through the new leaves at the cool blue of the sky and be free of his fear.

The car jounced across the tracks in Congress Square, and look-

ing out again, he saw the blank white windows of Al Schaeffer's store, the gilt already flecking off the big sign that said S C H A E F F E R D R Y G O O D S. Sunlight slipped against the windows of the Farmers and Mechanics Bank and splashed yellow light down the cool gray stone. "Cantrell—it's his fault. All his fault," he said to himself.

Behind him a couple of voices began a low-toned conversation, and after listening a minute, he turned slowly and saw a couple of high-school kids, pale and worried-looking, gazing into each other's eyes as they talked, as if searching for the thought, the word that would release them from each other and from their purpose.

"We're almost there, I guess," the stocky one said. "Do you know where we go?—where we ask?"

The other boy touched the knot in his tie with long fingers. "My old lady tried to hide my pants on me," he said.

"Maybe we're too young," the first one said.

"It's good money," the second said. "At least thirty a week is what I figure."

They looked anxiously at one another.

"Do you think there's any danger? You know . . . ?" Fat Boy asked.

"I don't know. I kind of wish—"

"What?" Fat Boy asked eagerly. "What do you wish, Skinny?" Skinny Boy shook his head. "Nothing," he said. "I forget."

Fat Boy looked disappointed.

They both started and looked frightened when Louie said: "You better go to the movies, fellers. You might get your heads caved in."

"We know what we're doing—hey, Skinny?" Fat Boy mumbled.

"Sure. Sure we do," Skinny said. His large brown eyes looked at Louie and darted away.

"Okay," Louie said. "It's your funeral." Mine, too, he thought.

They looked at him in sudden terror and longing. Their eyes begged him to push them apart, to send them away. But his glance, cold and stony, moved away from them, and he said to

himself: "They'll get theirs, the suckers. It'll be a good lesson for them," as if he himself were not one of them, as if they and all the others in the car, the indifferent, the anxious, the desperate men, were his enemies to have their heads caved in for stealing his job and starving him and his family to death.

The car stopped and emptied itself. The men all stood a moment as if they had to wind themselves up before they could move, while they looked down the block where the Iron Works stood like a gray stone fortress fixed solidly into the earth as if its foundations ran a mile down.

What's she doing to me? Louie thought in sudden fury, now that he had to move forward, now that he had to walk into the plant past the men he had promised to stick with. Almost blindly he began to walk forward and felt all about him the others moving, too, each one careful to walk in his own space, yet somehow leaning upon the others. His eyes darted among them, but their faces, blank and withdrawn, slipped away from his look. He looked for the two kids, but did not see them. He turned half-around in his stride, and over his shoulder glimpsed them walking quickly in the other direction back towards the Square.

Then his breathing came quick and light again, and his heart shook with a heavier beat. The pace of all the men about him slowed down as if they were cheap mechanical toys with defective springs. From the Flats side of the Works appeared a line of men, a long line, and above their heads the awkwardly tipped white placards they carried caught the sunlight. They walked slowly, but they walked all together, and here and there among them, Louie's glance, distraught and humble, caught a glimpse of some women and a number of kids. "We gotta get the public opinion on our side," Hanagan had said at the meeting. "The way old man Schaeffer used to tell us. . . . We gotta show the people our wives and our kids, so they'll know we're not the bunch of hoodlums that Cantrell will try to make us out to be." And at the thought of running the gauntlet of the strikers' hard eyes, their bitter mouths naming him traitor, he began to sweat. He wiped his wet

wrists with his handkerchief and stood with his mouth slack.

Slowly the others moved past him towards the solid cluster of strikers standing on each side of the gate with the sign EMPLOYEES above it. Soon he would have to cross the street to go in. He could not go alone. He got panicky, and hurried till he was close to the loosely clustered group from the trolley, their eyes like his fixed upon the entrance to the Works.

Some of them let their breath go in a quick sigh when the police and the deputies came marching out of the yard in a businesslike way, resolutely pushing the strikers back from the gate, leaving their own solid cluster standing in the strikers' places while the strikers moved back, without resistance, to the curb. The rest of the police, splitting into two files, spread out along the whole length of the sidewalk, their backs to the high gray board fence, over their heads the dull gleam of the new barbwire. Every policeman and every deputy had a gun stuck into his cartridge belt. A muttering, an occasional cry drifted upon the air, but there was no movement between the strikers and the others facing each other tensely as if waiting, Louie thought, for the music to strike up so they could begin an old-fashioned dance. The dance of death, he told himself suddenly.

Now was the moment—now he had to go. "Irene," he said to himself as he stepped off the sidewalk into the gutter, "Irene, what are you doing to me?" His heart turned over when he reached the other sidewalk, and he lowered his head as the pickets looked at him and the others drifting cautiously up onto the sidewalk trying to pretend no one else was there, their heads down a little on their chests, their eyes on the sidewalk, all of them shrinking into themselves and drawing away from the low mutter of "Scab! Scab bastard!" that ran along the picket line, and looking from under their brows at the other line, the police line, for reassurance.

The faces of the police were impassive, but every once in a while a shadow of perplexed recognition went across them, as if they were trying to remember where they had seen the faces of

the strikers before. Maybe last week at the movies? In the A & P? Up at the park? On the trolley? In the bank? At a benefit? In the Fourth of July parade? In the 5 & 10? At a hot-dog stand? At the graduation exercises? In the smoke-shop? Had seen them somewhere, had run across them, bumped into them. Knew their faces as well as their own, but just not able to place them, their names on the tip of the tongue, but just not able to name them. Knew them like they knew their own brothers, but strangers. Yet not strangers. Puzzled by the familiar look of them, must have lived in the city a long time, seen them plenty of times, but just did not know them; surprised to know them, yet puzzled at not knowing them.

The cautious eyes of the policemen squinted across the sidewalk at the strikers whose faces slipped away, eluded their glances, escaped their memories. Their eyes looked past the men moving slowly on the sidewalk between them, moving like men made of lead and tin, their faces concealed by the forward slant of their heads, and sought the faces across the sidewalk that kept slipping away from them. "You'll know me the next time," a striker said low-voiced across the sidewalk, and a cop answered: "I seen you before somewhere."

Louie Davis lifted his head when he heard the voices and looked sideways not at the strikers' line, but at the police rank. A little more to go, and he'd be inside the gate—safe where Irene wanted him to be. But when he realized that he would have to do this every day—walk slowly the gauntlet that stretched its tension like a tight web across the sidewalk, he felt despair rotting his resolution and his love away. Then his glance picked up a familiar face in the line. "H'lo, Al!" he exclaimed. "What're you doing here?"

Al, his round face sweaty, his mouth clamped tight, said stiffly: "How's tricks, Louie?"

Before Louie could answer, he felt a hand seize his arm and swing him away. "I been lookin' all over for you, Louie. All over" a quick voice said.

Louie let the hand draw him to the edge of the sidewalk out of the slow-moving men. He looked back once at Al as if to say a last word to him, but Al, his face pulled up tight under his Legion cap, was no longer looking at him.

"Some of the guys thought you'd walked out on us," Amby Tait said.

"I was held up at home," Louie mumbled.

He let the other take him off the sidewalk and lead him along the gutter behind the pickets.

"I wanna see those guys' faces when you show up," Amby said. "They said that you—"

It's out of my hands now, Louie thought. And then he realized it was Amby Tait he was talking to, and he wrenched away from him. It was ten years since he had talked to him, ten years since he had even let Amby know that he thought he was living, ten years since Amby had chased him with a club up to Dave Bandler's. "Don't touch me, you bastard!" he said. "Who're you to tell me what to do?" All his frustration, his fear and his despair boiled up inside him. He twisted to face Amby. "You can't squeal on these guys! . . . They're right out in the open now. Get away from me, you rat!"

Amby's mouth worked feebly, and he tried to speak, but only a hoarse confused mumble came from his throat.

Louie wheeled away from him and started up the street. Behind him he heard Amby's stumbling gait and his voice, hoarse and anguished: "Louie! Louie, wait! Louie, give's a break!" Then at his shoulder the voice went on: "It was a long time ago, Louie. . . . I didn't know what I was doin'. And I'm out on your side now even if the union didn't take me in. That proves it, don't it? . . . Louie, I'm afraid I'll go nuts. Give's a break!"

"Get away from me, you rat—you traitor!" Louie said, and it made him feel good to say it because suddenly he realized that in turning on Amby he was turning on himself, turning on the treachery to himself that had been collecting like a pocket of poison in him all his life, the poison made from fear of his father

and hatred of his in-laws and the corrupting love of Irene. He had broken loose at last from the belt that bound him to the stanchion in the dark of the cellar, and had stumbled out into the clear light and air of the open day.

Amby was standing patiently as if his outburst had taken all the strength out of him. He stood patiently, tiredly, waiting for the next blow. When Louie stood still, not seeing him, he began again: "You don't know how many times I been through this, Louie. . . . You were the last. I was waitin', I been waitin' years to tell you, Louie . . . to beg you. If you want, I'll kneel down to you."

"Christ, no!"

"Then whaddya say, Louie? You gonna give me the break?"

It was as if Amby had come just in time to save him, Louie thought—save him from selling his self-respect for the dirty dollar that would keep Irene for him. He saw in the other's eyes the anguish, dumbly, patiently endured, and he said slowly: "It's all right, Amby. I was out of my head there a minute. . . . I got excited." Then, as Amby did not move, he reached out and took Amby's loosely hanging hand and held it a moment.

"You mean it, Louie?" Amby said thickly. "You don't—"

"What're we standing around for?" Louie said. "Let's get up the line, and see what we got to do." He turned up the street, with Amby walking so close to him that he felt embarrassed. Poor, poor sucker . . . all these years, he thought. He felt Amby's eyes on his face, and to break the uncomfortable silence, he said: "I nearly dropped dead back there when I saw Al Schaeffer with that gun slung on him."

"All the guys're talkin' about it," Amby said timidly. "They say if his father was alive today, he'd shoot Al down like a dog."

Louie nodded. "He would. He sure would."

"The guys can't figure it at all."

"Neither can I," Louie said. "Remember when we were kids . . . you and me and Al?"

"Do I?" Amby said. "Say, remember the fun on the Fourth

July? I remember—" The light voice checked abruptly, and said in a different tone: "Here comes Barney."

They had come close to the group of strikers standing in the street in front of the gate, and Louie looked up at Amby's words and saw Hanagan walking towards them.

As he came up, he said: "We were beginnin' to wonder about you, Louie."

"My family—" Louie began, "I—"

"Didn't want you to come out with us?"

"But I'm here," Louie said.

"Good boy," Barney said. "Get hold of Nick—he'll tell you what squad you're with." He walked back to the crowd without speaking to Amby.

All through the morning and the long dragging afternoon Louie felt like a stranger to himself. It was strange not to be sitting in his scarred chair next to the foreman's, with the choppy roar of the milling-machines and the screech of the drills shaking the room, strange not to be looking up from the tally sheets once in a while down the long aisle at the dull shine of the machines and the swift spinning of the belts on the drives overhead. He had torn himself loose from his job, from the whole shape of his life so far . . . from Irene. All the while he walked the pavement with the others, stopping once in a while to wisecrack, or to talk about their chances, he thought of her. They were through, they were all done. Her folks would be tickled to death. Sadly he remembered how slowly she had agreed when he had asked her two nights ago if she would leave her folks and find another place for them to live. He could not imagine how it would be to say good-by, to go away, to know that he would not see her again, not see her and the baby again. He could not imagine it, and while he paced the sidewalk, he shook his head occasionally from side to side in painful wonder. He was glad to stop and talk to Maxie Voorhees. "How's it feel to be on the outside looking in?" he asked.

"Swell, if we was gettin' paid for it," Maxie said. He touched

Louie's arm. "But look, kid—it's no joke. The laugh was on us when the scabs started comin' in. We gotta do somethin', and what we gotta do is put the boots to all of them, cops or no cops. Or else we're sunk."

"I know," Louie said. "It's no joke to me, either." He looked up the street. The mid-afternoon sun struck points of light from the barbs of the wire. The pickets moved slowly back and forth, talking less, smiling less, getting off fewer wisecracks.

"The heart's goin' out of them already," Maxie said.

A squad of police still stood by the gate, but a good many of them seemed to have left, and none of the Citizen's Committee was in sight.

"You don't think we're licked so soon?" Louie asked.

Maxie's mouth twisted. "How's it look to you? . . . Those scabs are all inside with not a hand laid on 'em to stop 'em. It's all wrong, kid, the way we're working this. . . . Maybe we can get public opinion behind us. But what the hell's the good of gettin' public opinion and losin' the strike? See what I mean?" He looked earnestly into the young candid eyes. "Not that I'm criticisin' our committee, but with me it's been fight, fight all the way, and I don't know no other way of winnin'. A time comes when you have to stop talkin' and paradin', and fight. Check?"

"Check," Louie said.

Maxie pointed at the cars driving slowly past, the faces of the passengers all turned towards the Iron Works. "See?" he said harshly. "There goes the public. We're a bunch of freaks to them. Like the circus, only this show is free. So let's give 'em some action."

"Hanagan?" Louie murmured. "What does he—?"

Maxie cut in. "If enough of us squawk about how he's runnin' the strike, he'll have to listen, he'll have to change his mind. If he don't"—he shrugged—"then we'll have to go ahead on our own."

"I would not want us to split apart on how to run' the strike," Louie said slowly. "Suppose we get to fighting with each other, where are we then, Max?"

"No, no," Maxie said quickly, "don't get me wrong, kid. I wouldn't want that, either. I don't want to take the play away from Hanagan and the committee. All I want is for us to win. . . . If one way don't work, we gotta try another quick."

"Okay," Louie said. "It's okay with me. If we have to fight, the sooner the better. I got a family to take care of."

"Me, too," Maxie said. "And plenty more like us." He turned back on the sidewalk, and Louie watched his heavy back going away, a dark spot of sweat on the blue shirt between the shoulder blades. Another car went slowly past, the faces of the occupants staring out blankly at Louie. He shifted his sweaty grip on the staff of the placard he was carrying, and took a quick look at his watch. Four-twenty. Pretty soon he would be going home to Irene and telling her and her folks that he was out on strike and that he was working up to fight, to slug somebody so as to keep his job.

A voice from the street called his name, and he turned to see Joe Cascione leaning out of the low black roadster.

"Hi, Louie," Joe said. "Where'll I find Indie Whipple?"

Louie jerked his head towards the gate. "Up that way," he said. "How's tricks, Joe?" but Joe was already pulling out into the road. He sure is in a hurry, Louie thought, and he remembered that once he could have worked for Joe, maybe would have been rolling in money today if he'd taken his offer and gone in with him. A lot of water had gone under the bridge since then. He wouldn't have been any worse off as a bootlegger than as a striker. But fat chance of his being a bootlegger and married to Irene at the same time. Yes, and fat chance of being a striker and married to Irene at the same time. Irene. . . . He saw Joe's car stop a minute at the gate and then pull clear and vanish up the street.

IN THE CAR Indie said: "Listen, Joe, what's the idea? I'm supposed to stick around till after the scabs come out. You're puttin' me in wrong taking me away like this. You promised me it would be only nights."

"And emergencies, Indie, don't forget that," Joe said quickly. "Jes's, I had to pick you up, Indie. I never figured I'd need you so quick. Something's goin' on out at the farm. I can't figure it. I had a call early in the afternoon from Pete, and he tells me he saw a couple of guys hangin' around. So I figure it's a couple of tramps and tell him to forget it. Then he calls me a few minutes ago and says that his oldest boy, Rick, just came in off the road and a guy had stopped the kid and asked him a million questions—how many people were in the house, and what their name was, and did many trucks come in and stuff like that. But the kid is smart, Pete says, and plays dumb—he don't know from nothin'. When the guy lets him go, the kid makes believe he's goin' home, but he circles around and spots the guy out on the Pike talkin' to a carful of guys. Tough-lookin' guys, the kid says. So I got Connie Tennant out roundin' up some of the boys while we go out and see what's what. He's gettin' in touch with Mundy, too."

He spun the wheel furiously, and the tires screeched as the car headed up Glenhill Avenue. "It might be just a false alarm, but I can't take any chances, Indie. . . . I got that barn loaded to the roof with the best stuff in the state. So I had to pull you away, see?"

"I see, all right," Indie said. "You think there's any danger?"

Joe glanced quickly at him. His foot pressed down on the accelerator. "Danger?—no more dangerous than that dynamite you're standin' on down in front of that plant. . . . I could smell trouble when I turned into the street."

"Trouble all around me," Indie said in a low voice. They were getting out on to the Pike, and he looked vaguely at the horizon.

Joe watched the needle of the speedometer work up to sixty, and said as if talking to himself: "The guy's scared."

"No, you got me wrong, Joe. I ain't scared." The big black hand with the enlarged knuckles touched Joe's arm. "It's just that all my life I been hungry for quiet and somehow I just don't get to it. I don't know why."

Joe laughed. "Still dreamin' about that island, huh?"

"Still dreamin'."

"Well, don't worry, you'll get it," Joe said. He turned the car on to the approach to the Pike. "I figure this whole thing's a false alarm. The kid's got steamed up maybe from listenin' to some of that crap they dish out on the radio. . . . Just the same I got a few friends with me. Yeah, friends," he repeated. "Get that suitcase down there open. . . . It's under my legs."

Indie leaned down and hauled the suitcase free. He laid it across his knees. "Boy, it's heavy," he said. He opened it and goggled at the sub-machine gun lying diagonally across the compartment.

"A friend from the big city. From Chicago," Joe said.

Indie laughed, and Joe took a quick look at the dark face. "What's the joke?"

"This," Indie said. He tapped the gun. "It reminds me of playin' cops and robbers. Remember when we were kids?"

"Sure, Indie, sure. It's just make-believe." But he didn't like the sound of Indie's laugh—too high and thin. He peered ahead as they approached the turn-off at the dirt road, and said: "Lemme have one of them guns in the other side."

"Yuh," Indie said, and with fumbling fingers opened the shallower compartment. He gave one of the automatics to Joe who dropped it into his side-pocket.

"Get one ready in your hand, Indie," he said.

"Me?"

"Sure, you! Jes's, I told you I don't take chances. Take the gun!"

"Okay." Indie picked up one of the automatics and weighed it thoughtfully in his hand. "It's a long time since I held one of these," he said.

"I hope you ain't forgot how to use it," Joe said. Scarcely slowing at the turn, he veered off the Pike into the road, and sent the car bucking up over the ruts towards the farmhouse. "If some guys had showed only once, I wouldn't worry," he said. "But twice in an afternoon, it's got me worried, I don't mind tellin' you, Indie. Keep your eyes peeled."

"Now you got me worried," Indie said. "Boy, I don't like this business. Is it always like this?"

"I work hard for my dough, if that's what you mean. That's why I got so much." Joe leaned forward over the steering wheel, his hands tense, his eyes flicking to the woods on either side of the narrow road. The farmhouse came into sight, and he said: "Looks nice and peaceful, but just the same. . . ." and sent the car swiftly up the path to the house. As he got out, he looked towards the barn. "Come on, Indie. . . . Grab the suitcase, and we'll go in and see what's what." He waited nervously as Indie backed out of the car.

"Sure is pretty here," Indie said. He pointed to the river.

"Yeah," Joe said, then suddenly stooped, pulling Indie down into a crouch beside him.

A voice from the barn called again: "Joe! Hey, Joe!"

"Who is it? Whaddya want?" Joe yelled after a moment. His hand gripped hard on Indie's shoulder.

"It's Connie. . . . C'mere, I gotta show you somethin'," the voice answered.

Joe whispered hoarsely: "Listen, Indie, we gotta make a break for the house. That ain't Connie, that's the jacks!" His sweaty fingers touched Indie's wrist. "When I yell, start runnin'." He raised himself a little from his crouch. "I'm comin'—wait!" he yelled. He whirled up, and they threw themselves towards the house, Indie with the suitcase clasped against his chest.

A hoarse shout broke out from the barn, and then a quick burst of gunfire. They heard the windshield smash, as they plunged up the stairs and pounded against the door. Bullets thudded into the house.

"It's locked!" Joe gasped. "Indie—!"

Indie drew back a step, and hit the door twice with his shoulder. It burst open, and they flung themselves in, panting. Joe wheeled and crashed the door back into place. "What goes on here?" he said. "What's been happenin'?" He stared around at them.

Leo was sitting by the table with a copy of *Liberty* in his hand.

He looked at Joe for a second, and then turned back to the magazine.

Pete, his face pale, said: "This is the end, Joe. You're all done here. You gotta get your stuff out right away before you get us all murdered."

"Sure," Joe snarled, "I'll go right out and take it away on my back!" He turned towards Indie. "Watch them from the window, kid. . . . Get down on the floor."

Indie crouched obediently, the gun in his hand.

Joe snatched up the suitcase, and spilled the guns out on the table. "Where's Pa and the rest?" he asked.

"They're upstairs in the back bedroom," Elena said. "You promised last Christmas—" She stared at the guns.

"Get 'em down in the cellar," Joe said. "If they start shootin' again—" He stopped abruptly.

A voice distant but clear, was shouting: "Joe! Joe!"

Joe stood beside the broken window and yelled back: "You'll get yours, you punks!"

"Listen, Joe," the voice said, "we're gonna clean your barn for you!" There was distant laughter.

"There's a whole gang there," Elena said. "We'll all get murdered. Pete! Leo! . . . The telephone— Try. . . ."

Joe spun around. "Don't go near that phone, Elena!" He yelled out of the window: "Try and do it, you bastards!" and emptied his gun in one quick burst.

"Joe!" the voice shouted again, "we're gonna knock off your barn and you, too!" A rattle of shots sounded against the house.

Elena exclaimed: "We'll all be murdered for his rotten hooch! Pete! Leo! Try to call—!"

Joe turned to them. "Listen to me. For Christ's sake, listen!"

"Make it good," Leo said, grinning crookedly.

Joe looked at him with hatred. "Yeah, wise guy," he said. He wheeled to the others. "In ten minutes my boys'll be here to take care of these jacks. All we got to do is keep blastin' at them a little while so's they can't pull out with my stuff. . . . But if you

call the cops, we'll all land in the clink. You're all in the bag with me. . . . We couldn't fix this one."

"I thought your smart shyster Mundy could fix anything," Pete said. He looked at Elena.

"Sure, go on, crack wise if you wanna," Joe said. "But no phonin' for the cops!" He called back over his shoulder: "Rip that phone off the wall, Indie!" and Indie, moving slowly as if he were sleepwalking raised himself from his crouch by the window and walked to the phone.

His pink palms showed as he laid one on the long shank of the mouthpiece, the other over the box of the telephone. Then his shoulders contracted, he wrenched downward, and the instrument came away with the plaster crumbling behind it and the wires dangling. He set it down on the floor and went back to his crouch by the window.

Joe nodded in satisfaction. "The cops would do us no good. No good at all. In ten minutes, maybe less, my boys'll be here, and everything'll be jake."

"Listen, gorilla," Leo said. "Elena didn't know it, but I saw your little pals out there cut the wires as soon as they locked us up here. . . . But you, you're the Big Shot, you don't let anybody talk, you know it all!" His crooked grin twisted his mouth as he looked at the dangling wires.

"Son of a bitch of a wise guy," Joe said to him. He turned. "See anybody?" he asked Indie.

"I think they're gonna try to git us," Indie said in a flat muted voice. "They're workin' around to the side."

"Yeah?" Joe said. "They know they gotta knock us off before they can pull out with the stuff. From here we can blast them off the road. But I ain't gonna wait for them to try. I'll give them a taste of somethin' really good." He turned to Elena. "Listen—and don't give me any arguments. Get Pa and Caterina and the kids down in the cellar. . . . I'm goin' upstairs with this." He picked up the sub-machine gun. "And if you got any brains, you'll go down there, too."

Behind them Indie's gun fired four rapid shots. Then his low voice said: "I dropped one. Jesus!"

Joe whirled and ran to the window. "Where? Where is he?" he asked eagerly.

Indie pointed with the muzzle of his gun. "There. There by that teeny tree."

"Yeah!" Joe said. "Yeah! I see him! . . . You're worth a million to me, Indie boy!"

They heard Elena's voice at the back staircase calling urgently: "Pa! Caterina! Come down. You have to go in the cellar," and then the slow shuffle as the others descended.

One of the boys, Freddie, the youngest, said: "I wanna see!" and then as the cellar door closed, they heard his muffled voice again: "I wanna shoot."

"A fine thing!" Pete said. "A fine thing you're doin' to us."

"I paid you, didn't I?" Joe said. "I paid plenty." He lifted the machine gun from the table and took it to the side window. With the muzzle he poked out the glass, and laid the gun across the sill. Without bothering to aim, he let go at the trigger and fired a long continuous burst. When he released the trigger, he ducked below the level of the window, but there was no return fire. He patted the butt of the gun. "That'll show the bastards," he said.

Leo looked up from the magazine. "Don't stop, Big Shot," he said. "Because when the people down river get wise that it's shots they're hearin', the cops'll be here." He leaned back in the chair. "Maybe you oughta run out with your boy-friend there, and rip out their telephones, too."

Indie said from the floor: "They're gonna try to circle around. . . . I think maybe they're goin' to try to rush us." Sweat gleamed on his cheekbones, and his eyes slipped in embarrassment past the others.

"I'm takin' this upstairs," Joe said. He cradled the gun, picked up the extra clips, and started across the room. In the doorway, he stopped. "If you guys are so worried, grab one of those

rods. . . .” He waited, but they did not move, and he snarled: “F'r Christ's sake!”

They heard his steps overhead, and then the fainter sound of his ascent of the attic ladder. In a few seconds came the steady clatter of the machine gun again: the answering fire seemed to burst from all around the house.

Indie jerked the empty clip from the butt of his gun and shoved a fresh clip into it. “If they rush—” he said once, turning towards them, but they looked at him sullenly, and he turned to crouch under the window again. . . .

In the attic it was hot and musty. Joe scurried from window to window with the gun, his eyes bulging a little, the sweat already beginning to shine on his face. The danger, he saw, was from the back where the trellises of the grapevines gave cover close to the house, and into these he sent burst after burst. The acrid smell of the gunfire hung heavy under the slanting beams. After a little while, as he ran back and forth between the windows, he began to talk to himself in a steady undertone. The window that faced the road to the Pike drew him again and again, and he would stop in the middle of a burst and run to the shattered panes, straining to see if Connie and the rest of the boys were in sight. But as far as he could see, the road was empty.

From this height he could make out clearly the two trucks of the hijackers backed into the woods—if he had not driven up the road so fast, he would have seen them. He would have known right away what they were. He could have come up on the bastards from behind and blasted them to hell before they knew what had hit them. But just the same he and Indie had the barn covered, and they couldn't pull out with his stuff as long as the two of them were alive. The jacks must have just started to load the stuff when he and Indie came. He saw a movement under the young yellowish-green leaves of the vines and fired again and again, still muttering in a steady monotone: “. . . Connie. For Christ's sake, Connie . . . before it's too late. . . .”

This was not to be the finish of Joe Cascione, Joe the Big Bootlegger, Joe the Big Business Man, Joe the Big Boss, Joe the Big Shot, Joe the Big-Money Boy. But maybe it was. "Maybe it's curtains for you, Joie. . . . Maybe it's curtains. . . ." And as he felt the fight dying out of him, ebbing away in the pine box of the attic, he cried out and pulled the gun muzzle up, and fired wildly in a continuous rattle.

The sash over his head splintered in the return fire, and the bullets chunked against the brick of the chimney. "Why don't they come, the punks! Why don't they come? . . ." and he imagined Connie strolling into Ma Kearns's and saying to the boys: "Joe wants you, but there ain't no hurry. Take your time. . . . Sure, I'll have a beer," setting his can down in the chair and smiling slow and easy at the boys. "The bastard . . . the bastard," he muttered, and trotted from window to window, trampling the coat of his hundred-dollar suit, wiping off the sweat and grease of his hands on the twenty-dollar shirt, jerking in half the five-dollar tie, scuffing the fifty-dollar handmade brogues over the rough boards of the attic floor.

"It's a rat-trap. They got you in a rat-trap, Joie. . . . Jesus, Jesus, get me out of this," he mumbled as he dodged from corner to corner of the trap, his lower lip slack, the spit drooling from it, his hair hanging in sticky wisps on his forehead, the sweat pouring from him. "Jesus, get me out of this. Bring the boys, and I'll give a new altar to St. Anne's, I'll give for the new parochial school, I'll light the whole church with candles." But with his words, he saw again Connie and the boys, sitting on their cans swilling beer while the Big Boss waited in the rattrap for the bullet with his name on it, the Big Boss, the Wisest Guy who could take care of his own business.

"It's a trap, it's your coffin. . . ." The undiminishing fire of the men around the house answered him. Someone ought to hear the racket, maybe a guy driving on the Pike, maybe a neighbor down the river—the nearest neighbor two miles away, he remembered, was the reason he wanted the barn for his stuff so nobody would

be wondering, asking questions. He had cut himself off, cut himself off from the family so they wouldn't lift a hand to help him, cut himself off from people so they couldn't hear him when he was in a trap, cut himself off from the cops who hated him because they thought he had killed one of them in the dark, in the rain—"I couldn't help it, buddy. Buddy, you asked for it. . . ."—cut himself off from everybody so he could be Joie the Big Shot, Joie the Big-Money Boy.

He fired again and again, dissolving in fear, despair rotting his heart, so that his hands trembled and he could scarcely put the new clips into the gun. He saw suddenly that he was running out of clips. "It's curtains, Joe. Curtains for you, Joie. . . ."

He stopped firing and listened. They had stopped, too. Maybe it was Connie and the boys. He ran as if plucked forward to the window that overlooked the road. But the road was still empty. The silence held. "They're givin' up, they're goin'. Sure, they're gone. They know they can't get me now, they know my boys'll be comin' soon. Sure, they're goin'," crouching by the window while he prayed to Christ that it was so, that they were gone, his hands sweating as if they were melting into the hot barrel of the gun. But suppose they had got into the house. . . . He crawled shakily to the head of the ladder and listened.

Abruptly the firing broke out again. He lay flat on his belly, his head jerking in terror as the slugs whistled into the room. "But it's a good sign," he moaned, "there ain't a mark on me. I ain't been touched." And he made up his mind not to fire any more, he should have thought of it before—let them have the stuff. His life was worth more to him than all the booze in the world. At last he had enough. He would retire. Take it easy. Live on the fat of the land. And he realized that he did not have to go to the window any more. If they tried to come up for him, he could hold the ladder easy. They could never get him. Let them try to climb the ladder, that's all. He'd knock them off like flies. "And suppose they set fire to the place? The flames'll eat you up, Joie, you'll fry. Curtains for you, Joie. . . ."

The firing shifted to the first floor again, and then, as he got to his feet, he heard a footstep at the bottom of the ladder. He stiffened convulsively, and swung the barrel of the gun downward, but Leo's voice rose to him: "Joe? You okay?"

"Yeah, Leo, yeah," he stammered. "Jes's, I'm glad you came up. . . . I was goin' nuts up here."

Leo climbed up quickly, and stepped off the top rung of the ladder. He went to the window. "C'mere, Joe," he said. He pointed down the road. "I think your guys are comin'."

Joe leaped to the window. "Yeah, yeah, Leo. It's them. . . . Jesus, we're safe!"

His brother stepped back a pace. "Joe?" he said.

Joe turned towards him.

"Elena's dead, Joe," Leo said tonelessly. He lifted the gun in his hand and fired rapidly into Joe's chest. Joe went down on his hands and knees, twisted, and fell over on his back. There was a look of surprise on his face. His eyes, wide open, stared unblinkingly up at the dark beams, his heels rattled a moment on the floor, and then he went with a sidewise snap of the head like a switch being turned off.

"Bambino," Leo said out of his bitter crooked grin. "Big Shot!" He put his gun into the stiffening hand, and went down the ladder.

When he came into the living-room again, he saw that Pete had lifted Elena's body onto the sofa, and was on his knees beside her, praying. Across the room the nigger was still crouched under the window, the gun slack in his hand, his eyes wide in a fixed stare on Elena's face, which fallen sidewise towards him, showed her forehead oozing a little blood. Leo went to him and gripped the heavy shoulder, trying to haul him to his feet, but Indie did not respond, and in a sudden frenzy Leo slugged the shining cheekbone. When the dazed face turned up towards him, Leo clawed at his shoulder, and said: "Get out! You hear me? Get out!" Indie stood up slowly, and Leo shoved him towards the

kitchen door. "Get out!" he said again. "The Big Shot's dead. He's not payin' off any more."

"Yuh," Indie said. "I'm goin' now. I didn't know. I—" He took a faltering step. "Yuh. I should've stayed on the line. . . ." He lowered his head, and ran across the kitchen and down the back stairs, muttering: "I'm goin', I'm goin'. . . ."

From among the vines a yell went up when he appeared. He plunged along the trellises, and caught the gleam of the river through the young leaves among which the bullets searched for him. His stride checked when he felt a blow like a solid punch across his belly. He staggered, but kept running, his eyes fixed on the water.

The shooting and the yells veered away back towards the barn, and then he was splashing across the shallows. When the bottom dropped away beneath him, he began to swim, pulling himself through the water with frantic strokes of his arms, his legs trailing heavy behind him. The current took him, and he struggled to free himself, but it bore him downstream, and he realized that he could not hope to swim across to the other bank. His head turned as the current tugged at him, and he saw with a vague surprise the clumps of alder and hazel moving towards him. Then his fingers were scrabbling sand, and his knees bumped on the sand-bar.

He clawed at the alder whips, and pulled himself, panting, up onto the land. "I got away," he mumbled, and lay face down on the rough grass. "The poor girl. . . ." He tried dazedly to frame the words of reproach for Joe that struggled in his head.

After a time, he rolled over and sat up, but when he tried to rise, pain cut a long sharp knife through him, and he gasped and let his head fall forward on his knees. He drew back slowly in a minute or two and pulled up his shirt and undershirt. He looked at the row of small blue tight-pinched holes across his belly. "I sure been stitched," he said vaguely. Carefully he turned himself until he was on his hands and knees again, and began to crawl,

dragging his heavy body through the low-growing shrubs. Always as he turned and turned, circling clumsily, the gleam of water struck up into his eyes. On a little slope of sand he rested a long minute, his head lowering to the ground. Then he giggled, and said aloud: "Damn, if it ain't an island." He shook his head slowly from side to side, and his arms gave way under him. He rolled down to the water's edge, and his life ran out into the swiftly-moving water.

When the firing at the back of the house stopped and then broke out again near the barn, Leo peered cautiously from the window. Behind him, Pete was still on his knees, his head against the edge of the sofa. Over Elena's face, Leo had a moment before drawn the flower-patterned bright wool comforter that she had knitted last winter for her father because the old man liked to lie in front of the fire and snooze instead of going up to bed with the rest of them. When Elena had finished the comforter and draped it over Massimo's legs for the first time, he had run his blunt hand over the soft wool and then patted Elena's cheek. "Good girl," he had said.

"Stop it, Pa," she had told him, "you got me blushing."

Leo saw Joe's boys spill from the two cars, the guns ready in their hands, and make for cover along the edge of the woods that ran up to the right of the barn. Two men popped out of the doorway, and scurried into the woods. From towards the back of the house, four more suddenly shot out and disappeared behind the barn. Then Joe's boys were on their feet chasing after them, and soon the shots came muffled from the woods. Leo turned away from the window. "It's over," he said. "The rats're fightin' each other in the woods. . . . Wait'll they find out that the Big Shot is dead."

Pete's swollen eyes looked back over his shoulder. He got to his feet.

Leo answered the question in his look. "Sure," he said. "Dead."

Pete's eyes fell away from his, and he nodded. He said: "Tell them downstairs they can come up now. . . . But you better . . ."

He looked towards the sofa. "Leo, we gotta prepare them. . . ."

"I'll tell them," Leo said. "But I'm afraid for Pa . . ." and they both wheeled at a step on the porch.

Eddie Mundy came into the room. "What the hell is Joe up to?" he said angrily. "Who the hell does he think he is? Here I'm up to my neck in a strike, and—I told him a million times that I'm not his errand boy." He stopped abruptly, and looked around. "Where is he? . . . Say, what's been going on here? I thought I heard—"

Pete lifted his hand and summoned him forward. "C'mere, Mr. Fixer," he said. "I wanna show you somethin'."

Eddie approached him. "What is this—a gag?"

When he was close, Pete stepped quickly to one side. He reached down and twitched the comforter from Elena's face. "Look, Mr. Fixer. Look!" he said. "That's what you and Joe fixed up."

Leo watched the lawyer's face.

"How you goin' to fix that?" Pete's voice was like a slow hammer falling. "Huh?"

Eddie's face stiffened. "Elena!" he whispered hoarsely.

Pete's hand fell on his shoulder and spun him around. He had a glimpse of the wild swollen eyes, before Pete's fist with all the weight of his chunky body behind it smashed against the bridge of his nose and sent him toppling to the floor. In a step, Pete was beside him, his heavy boot kicking madly at Eddie's head. When the bruises sprang at the temples, Leo leaped forward and tried to pull his brother back.

Pete shoved him away. His boots began to thud against Mundy's sides.

"Pete, that's enough!" Leo exclaimed. "You wanna be hanged?" and managed to drag him off.

"Lemme alone," Pete said, struggling against him. "Lemme finish!"

"It's enough, Pete," Leo whispered urgently. "You gotta think of Pa and Caterina and the kids. . . ."

Pete stopped struggling. "Yeah," he panted. "Yeah. . . . The kids."

Leo held up his hand. "Wait— I think I hear a siren. The cops. . . . We oughta get him outa here."

"Yeah," Pete said, but he did not move.

Leo seized Eddie by the shoulders, and began to drag him towards the sagging door. Pete shook himself, and came forward to help.

On the porch, Leo said: "Just roll him down the stairs." Sweat shone on his face. They let the body go, and it bumped slowly down, crumpled, the head on the bottom step. Leo darted into the room and came back with Mundy's hat. He threw it down the steps, and went back. Pete was drawing the cover over Elena's face. "Look, Pete," he said. "We gotta cover up. For the cops. So we figured he was a gangster when he came in, see? And we jumped him. We thought he was one of the gunmen, maybe the one that shot Elena. . . . You listenin' to me, Pete?" He raised his voice. "We can't afford to go to jail."

"Yeah," Pete said. "I'm listenin', Leo."

In the moment of quiet, they heard clearly the rising scream of the police siren.

AT A FEW minutes before five, all the cops and the deputies appeared again and ranged themselves around the gate and along the fence. The pickets straightened their lines and crowded up close so that every once in a while the police had to work them back to the edge of the sidewalk and away from the gate.

"Look," Maxie Voorhees said to Louie, "look, they're like sheep! We're all done, I'm tellin' you. Unless we do somethin'."

Louie shook his head. His legs ached from the day-long continual pacing. "They're tired," he said.

"Tired? Nah. They're licked! We can all pack up and leave town. None of us'll ever work in this burg again."

"It's only the first day, Max. Give us a chance to get going," Louie said. "Look, here come the scabs."

A solid cluster of men appeared inside the gate, moving slowly out onto the sidewalk as the police and deputies flanked them and herded them past the strikers.

"I'm a punk," Maxie said suddenly, "and you're a punk, too. We're all punks, taking it smack in the face like this. . . ."

"For Christ's sake, shut up!" Louie said. All day long he had been thinking about the strike and about Irene. All his life, he had told himself, he had leaned on her, a "good boy" afraid to call his soul his own. And she knew it. She could not imagine him standing alone. That was why she had been so quiet when he was arguing with her folks about going on strike, knowing all the time that he would do as she said, and not what he thought he ought to do. But no more. He was on his own now. He was sick of his fear-stricken love. To keep Irene by keeping the job—to keep her by a betrayal of the decency other men expected of him—no, he could not. He would not. He would fight for his self-respect.

All his life till he had left his father's house, he had seen what the fear of losing the job could do to a man. It had made his father stupid and cruel, and some day, if he, Louie, had kept on, he would be the same way, maybe beat his own kid down in the cellar because he was crazy with the fear of losing his job. So what it all boiled down to, he told himself, was that if he could not keep her and keep his self-respect, too, then he would have to keep his self-respect.

It had taken him a long time, all day, to make up his mind while he paced the sidewalk, glad at first to have Maxie nagging away at him so that he would not have to think about Irene, but trying at last to avoid Maxie and his talk that took more heart out of him than the quiet faces of the men who paced and paced without a word.

"Shut up!" he said again to Maxie. "You been bellyaching all day. Do something, or else watch me do something," having finally wrung out of himself the decision that to get his self-respect complete, he had yet to fight for it. He started towards the gate, and Maxie, his eyes popping a little at the way Louie had turned on

him, an uneasy placating grin on his face, followed after him.

"You're the one that's licked," Louie said over his shoulder. "You been bawling all day. Because you're afraid." And it was true, he told himself—Maxie had been shooting his mouth off all day to hide his fear that he might have to fight for his job, hoping that somebody else, somebody unafraid, would fight for his job for him. He knew because that was the way he had been himself. But no more. If he was not afraid to break away from Irene, then he was not afraid of anything.

They came up to the crowd of strikers who stood sullenly in the street watching the scabs being herded along by the cops, and Louie pushed through and stepped up on the curb. "Scabs!" he yelled, and all the heads twitched towards him as if he had them on a string. "Listen! Listen to me. . . ." Behind him he heard the other pickets come running up. He felt the weight of their will stiffening his voice. "What kind of men are you?" he shouted, "to take another man's job away? to make him starve? to make his wife and kids starve? Where's your self-respect?" The sound of his voice, shrill and sharp, was strange and exciting to him. "You're rats that sneak to steal a man's bread, that come sneaking to steal his life!" The men behind him were like a solid wall at his back. His look picked up Al Schaeffer's round face, the lips tight, the eyes ashamed for him, and Louie's hand jerked up and pointed at him. "Look at Al Schaeffer there, a traitor to everything his father stood for. His father got killed, trying to organize this union, and now his son's here, he's standing here with his hand on his gun, ready to shoot us because we don't want to starve. You guys that are scabbing us, you're all traitors like him. You ought to be here in the gutter where we've been pushed, helping us, instead of scabbing for the lousy dollar."

From along the fence, a voice shouted: "Crap! Go take a crap for yourself!"

A cop came up and laid his hand on Louie's arm. "That's enough now," he said. "You said enough," and the other cops were mov-

ing forward against the strikers, saying: "Come on, now. Break it up. Break it up."

Louie wrenched his arm away. "I got a right to speak," he said. "You can't—" and saw suddenly that Al Schaeffer was plunging upon him. He threw his arms up in front of his face to ward off the wild blow that Al swung at him, and then he was grappling the round heavy body, and heard Al's voice against his shoulder muttering incoherently: ". . . bastard . . . can't talk about my father. . . . Hunky . . . hunky bastard. . . ." while he flailed at Louie's head until the charge of the pickets carried them both up onto the sidewalk and broke them apart.

Jammed against the fence, Louie twisted, struggling to get free, and saw cowering back beside him a white-shirted figure, a pasty face with sick eyes. He slugged the head as hard as he could and felt the impact of the blow tingle through his fist. The face dropped off the fence. About him he heard the grinding shuffle of feet on the pavement and saw in the whirl of heads and arms the dark contorted face of Barney Hanagan bleeding from a long scratch across the brows, a hand still clawing at Barney's face. He threw himself forward, but a gun glanced off the back of his head, and he went down into a whirling wave of black.

When he came to, he found himself being helped along by a hand under each armpit. He tried to get loose, feeling sick and dizzy.

"All right, Louie," a voice said, "take it easy now. It's all over." He turned his head slowly, and saw it was Maxie Voorhees and Amby Tait who were walking him along.

"You're a fightin' fool, kid," Maxie said.

Louie realized they were walking through Congress Square. He looked around dazedly and saw a number of other men hurrying along, occasionally throwing quick glances back over their shoulders. "I'm all right now," he said after a minute or two. "What happened?"

"They broke it up, Louie," Amby said.

t you sure started somethin', kid," Maxie said.

Louie looked at his uneasy face and thought: He's not going to get his job back. Tomorrow he'll be down begging his job back. "We go through with it now," Louie told him.

"Sure, sure," Maxie said. "Look—I'll give you a ride home in my car. . . . It's parked up here."

After they had dropped Amby off at his corner, Louie became aware of the throbbing in his hand and looked down at the swollen fingers, wondering if the hand were broken. Lightly, with the other hand, he touched the lump, painful even to his fingertips, at the back of his skull.

"It's lucky your head wasn't split open," Maxie said.

The car stopped in front of the Curtis's, and Louie got out. "Thanks," he said, and added deliberately: "I'll see you in the morning, Maxie. Pick me up, huh?" He knew that he would not spend the night in this house, but he wanted to hear what Maxie would

Maxie's look fell away from his. "Uh—I promised—I gotta pick up some guys the other side of town."

"Okay," Louie said. "See you in the line then, huh?"

"Sure," Maxie said loudly, "sure." He pulled away in the jalopy, and Louie went up the walk and into the house.

As soon as he came in, Irene came running down the hall. "It's Louie, Louie." She kissed him. "I was worried."

"I got tied up," he said.

"Was there trouble at the Works?" she asked anxiously, stepping back to see his face. "You're pale, Louie. . . . What happened?"

When he did not answer at once, she seized his hand and at his mace of pain cried out: "There was trouble! Louie, are you all right?"

Before he could speak, before he could tell her what he had to say, Curtis's voice said behind them: "We've been waiting supper for you, Louis."

She turned, and they followed her into the dining room, Louie

moving automatically, his skull aching as if it were going to split open.

Mr. Curtis came in and sat down, beaming. "I could swear the baby spoke to me," he said, unfolding his napkin.

Then they all saw that Louie was still standing, leaning on the back of his chair.

"Louie—wake up!" Irene said. "You're dreaming."

He looked slowly at them, and said: "I have to tell you now. . . . I'm out on strike." Irene seemed to wilt while he went on, speaking to her alone. "I can't help it, Irene. If it's you or me, if you have to have it that way, then this time, it's me. This time I can't give in." He put his hand to the back of his head.

"But you promised me, Louie," she said. "You promised!"

"I know," he said. "But I had made a promise to myself before that. And that's the one I got to keep."

"I hope you realize just what this means," Mrs. Curtis snapped. She thrust her bosom forward.

"This is just between me and Irene," he told her. "Nobody else."

"Look here, Louis, you'd better keep a civil tongue, or—" Mr. Curtis was struggling up from his chair.

"I'm going," Louie said. There was a long pause while he watched Irene's white face. "What I want to know is, Irene, are you coming with me?"

"What are you saying, Louie?" she said in a strained voice. "You know there's no place to go. The baby. . . ." Her words trailed away.

"We'll find a place," he said. "Irene . . . ?"

"You're talking foolishly, Louie. . . . And you broke your promise to me."

He let his hands fall from the back of the chair. "Okay then," he said. He turned and went to the door.

From the hall he heard his mother-in-law's voice: "Good rid-dance is what I say!"

He went upstairs and packed some clothes in the kit-bag that he had had in the army, and came slowly down again. Irene was

standing in the hall, waiting for him, and for a moment a wild hope grew in him.

"Louie," she said brokenly, "Louie. . . ."

His heart beat hard, and he put his arms around her.

She murmured: "Please, Louie. . . . You'll break my heart."

"I can't help it, Irene. . . . I can't."

She drew away from him. "You'll be sorry, Louie. You'll come back crying."

"No," he said, and went down the hall and out the door. Going down the front stairs, he realized he had not seen the baby, but he did not stop.

Four or five of the long sheds in the yard behind the Works had been made over into bunkhouses for the deputies and strikebreakers who felt safer inside than out. Sitting on the army cot, Jack Smith touched the congested lump over his right eye and said: "My head's splittin' open."

The man next to him grunted. "Tonight was only the beginnin', pal—wait'll you see what they do tomorra. All I wish is I had one of them iron hats like we had in the army so's not to get my head caved in. . . . " The naked light bulbs dangling from the loosely strung wires overhead lighted up his long morose face.

"You think they'll start somethin' tomorra too?" Smitty looked at the pistol belt lying beside him. "You sure they'll be fightin' again tomorra?"

The other sat up. "You ain't gonna sleep tonight, I can see that." He lay back on the bed again. "It'll get worse before it gets better. I been through strikes before. It's good dough, but you gotta earn it."

"Not me!" Smitty said. "The dough's no good to me if I get my head split open."

"You better blow then," the man said. "If you can't use the dough, you better screw outa here. They won't let you sit here on your can tomorra. I c'n tell you that, pal."

Smitty got up abruptly and walked down to the end of the shed

where the men had clustered around a crapgame. The other followed him. For a little time he watched the red dice rolling on the blanket. Two of the men were wearing bandages, and another had his arm in a sling. Beneath their excited cries at the roll of the dice, he heard their low-voiced talk, fretful and terrifying.

The voices murmured: "Murdered maybe . . . gun-play . . . pistol-butt . . . a lead pipe . . . broken ribs . . . broken back. . . ."

The man with the dice rolled them out. "Come, seven!" he said.

The voices muttered: "Look at that lump . . . look at that bruise . . . look at my arm, I think it's swollen . . . almost broke my nose . . . kicked me in the belly . . . slugged me in the kidneys . . . tried to thumb my eye out."

The dice rolled and tumbled on the blanket.

The voices mumbled: "Tomorrow. . . . Tomorrow's the day. . . . Tomorrow the fun begins . . . Tomorrow'll be murder. . . . Tomorrow's the day. . . . Tomorrow there'll be murder. . . ."

The man who had followed Smitty down to the game nudged him. "Hear what they're sayin'? . . . I wish I was outa here."

"Me, too," Smitty muttered.

The man jerked his thumb at the crapshooters. "They're rollin' their lives away. Tomorrow some of 'em'll be dead."

"Y'think so?"

The man laughed, and pointed at the tumbling dice. "It's in the dice, buddy. Dja notice? . . . No one's been right tonight. They're all jinxed. They all crap right out as soon as they roll."

"I don't feel so good," Smitty told him. "I got slugged today. Look. . . ." He pointed at the bruise on his forehead. "I'm gonna lay down for a while." He walked back, stumbling over the uneven grease-blackened floor, and eased himself onto the cot. He shivered, thinking: You gotta get outa here. You gotta blow. You gotta screw outa here before you get killed, Jack.

He rolled over on his belly, and saw himself tomorrow rolling on the ground, the blood spilling out of a hole in his belly. What

was he waiting for? Was he nuts? He would blow tonight, dough or no dough. They couldn't stop him if he wanted to go. "You ain't gonna get killed, Smitty," he muttered into the blanket. "You got a lot to live for." But dough—Jes's, if he only had some dough. If he could only put the bite on someone so as to get away from this stinking burg, this hole in the ground. He thought of Lily—Lily married to a Turk who was rolling in dough, Lily who had plenty of dough, Lily who had turned him down after all they had been to each other. "The whore," he mumbled. If he could only lay his hands on her to choke the dough out of her. . . .

He sat up. If she wouldn't tap the till for him, all right. Okay. He'd tap it himself. Why not? All he had to do was sneak out around eleven before the Turk closed the joint, stick the gun in his face, grab the dough out of the till, and screw right back here to the shed. In the morning before the fighting started he could just drift away. Grab a train, and blow for good. He began to sweat with excitement. The glittering bulbs seemed to burn on his face. A cinch!—easier than it was that Fourth of July night long ago when he had stuck the Turk up in the park. He stared at the lights. But suppose . . . suppose something happened, something went haywire. Not this time, he exulted, crushing back the sudden fear, not this time, not if he was coming back to the shed so that the cops would be taking care of him all night while he slept with the Turk's bankroll inside his shirt. It would be a hot one, the cops taking care of him!

"The old bean's still hitting on all twelve, Smitty boy. . . . Grab the dough, and you're cashing in on the promises the country made you. If the Wall Street bastards can get away with it, then you can, too. All you need is your brains and the chance to use them. And you got the brains, Smitty. You're wise. You're a wise guy. You seen from the beginning that it's the dough that counts. Every day is Fourth of July and Christmas for the guy that's got the dough, and God helps them that help themselves. Check, Smitty? Check, kid."

He meant to keep awake till it was time to start, but he fell asleep.

When he awoke, he broke out into a sweat because he was afraid that he had overslept and trapped himself. He fumbled for his watch, and struck a light. Okay! Only twenty-five past ten. The shed was dark except for a bulb burning over the doorway, and at the thought of working his way out, with maybe cops scattered all around, he wilted. The man on the next cot groaned deep in his sleep—as if he was dying, Smitty thought, and told himself suddenly: “Not me, it could be me, but it ain’t gonna be me. I’m gonna get the dough and blow.”

His heart began to pound as he jerked himself up and went slowly up the shed among the rows of cots, feeling his way towards the door. After he had slipped through it, he began to get his bearings. The sheds were right behind the Works, and he looked back once at the great bulk, solid and black against the sky, before he turned and scurried down the siding along the freight cars strung out towards the drag that ran beside the river.

As he went, he pushed the gun down tight into his coat pocket. He couldn’t take a chance of losing it. He came to where the string of cars cut through the fence, got down on his hands and knees, and scrambling under the coupling between two cars, came out into the coarse grass that bordered the lot where the kids from the Flats played ball.

At the sound of voices his heart jumped, and he sank down low. A couple of cops paced by. He would have to watch out for them when he came back in, but so far it was a cinch, he was getting the breaks—if only everything else went as smooth, was all he hoped.

The cops’ steps died away, and he hurried down the length of the lot till he came out on Tremayne Street. He had his bearings now. This was near where the nigger lived. Some day he’d get the black bastard, some day he’d put a bullet in his belly. “But not now, Smitty. Tonight you can’t stop to think about getting even, tonight you got to get the dough. The dough, Smitty boy!”

When he came to the Square, he was careful not to pass under the arc lights where somebody might see him and recognize him. The clock in the City Hall said twenty to eleven. He had just

enough time to get up to the Turk's while he was closing the joint—maybe walk in on him when he was counting the dough out of the register so that all he had to do was reach out and take it from the Turk's shaking hand. He touched the cool smooth butt of the gun in his pocket. "Easy money, Smitty. Easy money. . . ."

He went up Grant Avenue that ran parallel to Hamblin Street and cut down Osborne so that at two minutes of eleven, he came out on Hamblin just above the store. He heard voices on the street as he came to the corner and he slowed his walk, turning his head away into the cool April night wind. Then he walked slowly past the store, taking a quick look to see if any customers were in the place, and saw no one but Lily and the Turk. "You make your own breaks, Smitty. . . . The dice are right for you, kid."

He whipped out his handkerchief and tied it tight across his face just under his eyes, pulled his hat down low, took the gun in his hand, and went in fast. It was as he had imagined it. The two of them were standing behind the counter by the cash register, and they hardly knew he was in the place before he was sticking the gun into their faces. He kept the words low and deep in his throat so that his voice would not break. "Come out from behind there. With your hands up!"

Their heads jerked up, they goggled at him, then they raised their hands and came out, Paul, his heavy face dark and wary, Lily, her lower lip drooping, her eyes strained in fear.

"Get in the back room," Smitty commanded them.

Lily backed away, but Paul took a step towards him, and Smitty lifted the gun a little higher. "None of that," he said. "One more step, and I'll let you have it. You hear me?"—his voice shook—"I'll shoot."

Paul stood still. "I know you, Mister," he said. "Is not the first time, huh? Long ago you stuck gun on me." He nodded. "An' took my money away."

"What're y' talkin' about?" Smitty snarled. "Get in back there, y'lousy Turk!"

"It's him, Paul!" Lily put her hand to her mouth. "It's Jack. . . . I know it's him!"

"You whore!" Smitty said. "I'll blow your face in." He thrust the gun forward. "Get in back there!" His hand began to shake with haste, with anxiety, with fear.

"Not again, Mister," Paul said slowly. "Not again. . . ."

"Shut up! One more word outa you, and I'll plug you!" Smitty said. They were moving back slowly before him. Behind him was the cash register, with the dough waiting for him, but now, before he could grab it, he had to lock them up for all night because they knew him and he would have to blow town right away.

Paul stopped again.

"Paul, no!" Lily said. "Come on, he'll shoot you, he'll kill you!" She fumbled for the door-knob behind her and jerked the door open. "Paul!"

His face twisted, he half-turned as if to follow her into the back-room, and then lowered his head and lunged under the gun. Convulsively Smitty's finger squeezed the trigger, but already Paul's body was sweeping him back. He tried to bring the gun down to fire directly into the broad back under his chest, a thin scream whistling out of his open mouth, when Paul's knee drove up like a log between his thighs. A pain, clawlike, tore at him, and all the strength went out of him like water swiftly flowing away, blackly curtaining his vision as it went, and letting him crumple to the floor.

When he came to, he was looking dazedly at the legs of chairs and tables. He was puzzled. Then he remembered, and realized that he was sitting on the floor, propped up against the front of the soda fountain.

A voice over his head said: "If you get up, I shoot!" and he pulled his head up off his chest and saw Paul Sakarian, standing a little off to one side, pointing the gun at him. "Pretty soon the p'liceman come to take you in jail," Paul said.

Smitty jerked as if a hook had impaled him.

"Don't move," Paul said.

"Did y' call the cops? Did you? . . . Lily?" He twisted frantically towards her. "Did he call the cops?"

"Certainly he did, you dirty rotten crook!"

He tried to stand but there was no strength in him, and he mumbled: "That's no place to hit a guy." Suddenly he began to cry. "I didn't mean nothin', I was hungry, I was broke. I didn't have a nickel to my name. Don't turn me in. You don't know what it is to be hungry and starvin'. . . . Lily, don't let him do this to me!"

"Don't you talk to me, you dirty rat!" she said.

He managed to lurch to his feet and stood swaying, looking down with horror at his bound hands. "Untie me! Lemme go! You can't do this to me!" he sobbed. "I'm an American citizen!"

"Me, too," Paul said. "I'm citizen, too."

Smitty sank to his knees and lifted his tear-blubbered face towards them. "Lemme go before the cops come. I swear t' Jesus I'll blow outa town. You'll never see me again." His thin hair was disarrayed, his mouth hung slack, and he grovelled for his freedom before them. But when they made no move to let him go, he fell quiet. He seemed to brood. Then he pulled himself up clumsily, and said with mournful dignity: "You don't realize what you're doin', sendin' a man to jail, lockin' him up. You done it to me once. This time you gotta let me go."

"You're a dirty liar!" Lily said. "It was you the first time, too. . . . We both know it." An expression, vindictive and troubled, pulled her mouth down.

"You gotta let me go," Smitty repeated mechanically. His eyes darted to the door.

"No," Paul said. His look went slowly from Smitty to his wife.

She realized he was watching her. "What're you lookin' at me for?" she said to him. "Keep that gun on him, on that dirty rat before he gets away. He always called you a greasy Turk, he always made fun of you. Don't let him go."

"You better let me go, you punk," Smitty said suddenly, "or I'll tell the whole city about her and I. It was for her I was robbin' you—so we could go away together." His voice rose complacently.

"She's been dippin' in the register for me for years, and when I get up in court to answer the charges, I'm gonna say it was her drove me to it." He nodded his head in satisfaction. "Yup, she's been my babe for years. We been cheatin' on you for nearly ten years now."

"It's a lie, a dirty lie, Paul! Don't listen to him!" Lily pulled at her husband's arm, but he stood with his heavy head lowered, his face clouded over.

Smitty jerked his head contemptuously at her. "If you want the whole city to know what a sucker you been, let the cops take me. But believe me, Paulie boy, I'll get even. I'll tell the world, what I mean. Many a time when you was in here workin' your tail off for her, we was sittin' in the park, huggin' and squeezin' and kissin'. Yeah, and up in the hotel room. I could tell you plenty what went on. . . . Ask some of the guys that hang around the Rivoli, or ask the bellhops how many times she sneaked up to my room."

Paul's hand across his face made his head ring.

"Okay. You c'n sock me," he said bravely. "But just the same, it's the truth. Look at her. Look at her and see if I'm lyin'."

Lily was staring at him with a mingled look of horror, hate, and guilt. She sprang forward and grappled with her husband for the gun. "Give it to me," she panted. "I'll kill him! I'll murder him! The promises he made—" She stopped short.

"Get back," Paul said, and pushed her away.

"Paul," she moaned, "you don't believe him, that dirty crook, before your own wife?"

"Crap!" Smitty said. "She thinks she's in the movies again. . . . You don't have to believe me if you don't want," he went on with dignity, "but just wait till you hear the lovey-dovey letters she wrote me when I didn't get around to see her. Wait till my lawyer reads them in court." He looked eagerly at the heavy head lowered before him. "Of course," he said, "if you lemme go, it'll be the last of me in this town. I'll blow right away, I'll keep my trap shut. Whaddya say?" He leaned forward eagerly, trying to catch the other's eyes.

But Paul did not raise his head. He let fall upon him the dribbling slime and did not move.

Smitty's head turned towards the door and back again. "Okay, you ast for it! I'm gonna tell the cops that me and Lily fixed it up two nights ago when I was in here. I got witnesses I was here. I'm gonna tell them that she made me do it, that she promised me if I got the dough, we'd run away. . . . Mister, you been married to a whore for all these years and didn't know it. . . . But I never would of done it if it wasn't for her. She was the one made me come tonight." He looked towards the door. "Lookit how she trièd to make you go in the back room right away when I had the gun on you!" He turned to Lily. "Howdya like that for apples, hey, sweetheart? Howdya like that?"

She could only gibber at him, her eyes so inflamed with hatred that he shrank back against the counter, saying: "You better watch her, Mister," and went on, "I guess she can't stand to hear the truth. But I'm not goin' to jail for no broad. Not me! She's tryin' to act her way out of it, but she knows I'm tellin' the truth. . . . And if I was you and found out my wife was cheatin', I'd throw her out on her tail." He nodded briskly. "So whaddya say, Mister? You don't want all this stuff to come out in the papers, have people laughin' at you for a sucker, let 'em know that your own wife was gonna rob you and run away with her boy-friend." He waited, and then burst out: "You big dummy, what're y' standin' there for? Whyn't y'say somethin'?"

The door came open abruptly, and two cops, their guns out, came into the store.

"What's up, Sakarian?" the first cop said.

"Like I said on telephone." Paul gave the gun into the cop's hand, and pointed at Smitty. "He's a one," he said. "He tried to take money with gun. . . . I knock down and tie him up."

"I'm gonna be sick," Smitty said. He retched.

The cops came up and took him. "I know this punk," the second one said. "I seen his face somewhere."

"Let's go," the other said.

Smitty hung back. His feet dragged on the floor. "That broad there . . ." he gasped out, "she put me up to it. She told me. . . ."

The cops glanced back at Paul. He shook his head at them.

"My wife," he said. "He's crazy."

One of the cops cuffed Smitty on the head. "Shut up!" he said. "You'll have ten years in the pen to tell yourself stories." They went out, half dragging him, his shoes scuffing on the floor.

As Paul turned towards her, Lily threw herself forward. "Paulie, it's lies! All lies!" She tried to embrace him, but he pushed her aside.

"Get out." He shoved against her with his bulky body. "Get out!" he said again.

She began to cry. "Lies—it's all lies!"

His bulk still forced her back. "I'm goin' to make a divorce," he said. "I waited too long already."

Her sobs stopped. Then she drew herself up, and said venomously: "Who will you divorce, you greasy Turk? I'll divorce you! I'm a Namerican, and I'll show you. You can't toss a Namerican around. I'll get my freedom. I'll get plenty of alimony outa you. I'll show you!"

For the first time the expression on his face changed. He smiled a little. "We are all Americans," he said. "You and him and me."

At the door she stopped short. "Gimme my hat and coat. I'm not goin' out in the street like this."

He turned and went to the back room to get her things.

When he came out, she was standing at the cash register, frantically scrabbling up the bills and change. "You can't stop me," she said, her brass-bright hair disheveled, her eyes staring defiantly from her puffed face. "I worked for this dough. I'm not goin' without a cent."

He said nothing, merely watched her as she snatched up the money.

She edged around the counter and took the hat and coat and bag he was holding out to her. "You stink!" she spat at him. "An' I was gonna walk out on you anyway." Halfway down the store she

wheeled. "I'll get a lawyer. I'll show you how to treat a girl that's slaved for you all these years." She began to cry again and held out her arms to him. "You can't do this to me!"

"Go away," he told her, "get out!"

Her hand swept along the marble counter. The glasses crashed to the floor, and she turned and ran out.

After a moment Paul leaned over the counter and closed the till of the cash register. He stood shaking his head. Then he murmured to himself: "Good-by. Good-by, America. . . ."

"You promise to go right up after the news flashes?" Josie asked him. "You promise, Father?"

"Yes, yes," he said impatiently. Francis smiled at him, and the old man shrugged as he turned towards the radio. His fingers touched the dial, and the radio said: "Brk-brk-brk—latest local news brought to you by the *Chronicle's* radio reporter, Phil Cantrell."

"Good evening," said the professionally weary, detached voice. "In one of the wildest fights between bootleggers and hijackers since the coming of Prohibition to this state, four people, including one unidentified man, were killed today at the farmhouse of Massimo Cascione about four miles out of the city on the Pike close to the river. Hijackers who attempted to clean out the barn which police estimate contained some \$20,000 worth of liquor, were met by machine-gun fire from the farmhouse. In the ensuing battle which was still raging when police, summoned by a passing motorist, arrived, three men and a woman were killed, and another man was badly injured. The dead are: Joe Cascione, 37, notorious bootlegger, freed last winter after the police failed to make a case against him for the murder of state-trooper Alvin Jenks; Frank Whipple, 37, ex-prize-fighter of this city, known to many sports-followers as the Black Tiger or the Tiger Kid whose body was found on a sandbar in the river to which with amazing strength he had evidently swum after being wounded in the fighting; Elena Cascione, 35, sister of Joe Cascione, evidently killed by a stray bul-

let; an unidentified man, one of the hijacker's gang—"

"Terrible, terrible," Josie said.

Her father, crouching forward, waved impatiently at her to be still.

". . . injured man, Edward Mundy, 36, lawyer of this city who on numerous occasions successfully defended Joe Cascione on various charges. He is on the danger list at the Glenhill Hospital with a fractured skull, several broken ribs, and internal injuries, and has not yet recovered consciousness."

"Listen to that, will you!" Francis exclaimed. "Eddie Mundy!—I was talking to him just two nights ago!"

"Is he the one who—" Josie began, but her father said peevishly: "Can't you two wait till it's finished?"

". . . held as material witnesses, the father and the two brothers of the dead bootlegger, who deny having taken part in the gun-battle and maintain to police that they stored the liquor in the barn only under threat of injury from Joe Cascione. Mundy also will be held as a material witness. A rumor that the State Bar Association would move soon to disbar Mundy from further law practice was denied tonight by Henry M. Brassbine, president of the Bar Association. He added, however, that should the police investigation prove Mundy's connection with the dead bootlegger to have been unethical, the Association will certainly take action."

"They'll disbar him," Francis said. "He's all done. . . . They've been watching him for a long time now."

Josie pointed to her father who was glaring at him. Francis put his hand over his mouth. Then he leaned forward tensely as the radio said:

"The fear that the men on strike at the Cantrell Iron Works might resort to violence in an attempt to force acceptance of their demands was confirmed this evening when fighting broke out at the entrance to the plant. The strikers attacked workers as they were leaving the plant shortly after five. A short but bloody battle followed in which deputies of the recently formed Citizen's Committee for Law and Order and police fought against the enraged

strikers, and succeeded finally in quelling the riot without resort to gunfire."

"Godalmighty!" John Cantrell said.

"Father, please," Josie begged. "You get so excited—go up to bed. It's a quarter past eleven. All this will be in the paper in the morning."

He shook his head at her without turning from the radio. "Wait," he said. "There's more. . . ."

". . . Strikers retreated from the scene of battle, taking with them some of their wounded, but it is estimated that at least thirty were hurt, a few badly. Six police were rushed to the hospital for treatment, among them Lieutenant Michael Sheehan of the Central Station who has a severe concussion. Also treated by physicians were twenty-two deputies.

"In a statement issued tonight Harvey Cantrell, president of the Iron Works, demanded that Mayor Pingree call upon the governor for troops to keep order. Acknowledging the fine work of the city's police, the statement went on: 'To prevent further damage to life and property, it is imperative that the National Guard be summoned as it has been in other communities where the police and deputies are so greatly outnumbered.'

"Mayor Pingree late tonight refused to comment on the statement, but said that he was conferring with Commissioner Kinney and Chief of Police Summers on the best course to follow. It is hoped that the issuance of an injunction by Judge Woodward of the Superior Court restraining the strikers from picketing or congregating on any of the streets or land bordering the Iron Works may prevent further outbreaks. Police are now patrolling the plant, aided by deputies of the Citizen's Committee. . . ."

John Cantrell turned the voice down to a crackling murmur and faced around at them. "Did you hear?" he asked. "'They retreated, carrying their wounded with them.' Like a war," he said fearfully, "like a war."

He turned up the radio again, and it said: ". . . special engagement at the *Imperial* for the remainder of the week, Benny Bogle

and his Blues Blowers Band. The feature attraction—”

Josie rose from her chair and, leaning across her father, shut the radio off. “That’s all,” she said. “You’re going to bed now if Francis and I have to drag you upstairs.”

The old man rose slowly. “I’m going down to see Harvey tomorrow,” he said.

Josie exclaimed, and Francis said: “You’ll get nowhere with him. I wouldn’t—”

“You can’t!” Josie said. “You’re not strong enough. Besides I should think you’d have too much pride—”

The old man glowered at her. “Pride! What’s pride got to do with it when men might get killed? Hey? Answer me that, Josie.” A look of stubbornness fixed itself on his face. “As for its being none of my business—” He started across the room and stopped. “Well, it is my business. I own stock in the Iron Works, don’t I? And stock in the Bank, too, don’t I? I got a right to have my say, and Harvey’ll see me if I have to stay in his plush anteroom all day!”

He’s sure a battler, Francis told himself, twisted in his chair to watch the flash of his father-in-law’s eyes.

“Francis!” Josie appealed to him.

He shrugged. “Josie, you can’t interfere if a man thinks he’s got a job to do.” He was puzzled for a moment by her quick flush, and then realizing what interpretation she was putting upon his words, stammered: “Josie, I didn’t mean—I was only thinking that your father might do some good in this situation. I only meant—”

“I understand,” she said stiffly, and turned to her father. “Just promise me you won’t get excited. Doctor Merkle said—”

The old man gestured impatiently. “Don’t get so fussed about me, Josie. . . . Good-night,” he said.

“Good-night.” They listened to his slow ascent of the stairs.

“‘. . . carrying their wounded with them,’ ” he muttered as he switched on the light in his room and sat down, panting a little from his climb of the stairs. “Like a skirmish . . .” he said, rubbing at the ache that had started up in the stump of his left arm while he had crouched forward to the radio. He undressed and got

into his nightshirt, but his head felt hot and he knew he would not sleep. He put on his desk light, turning the shade so that the light would not shine towards the door and switched off the overhead light. He put on his bathrobe and slippers, and took from its drawer his manuscript, his fingers riffling the pages. There was yet much to write, he told himself, but things happened almost too fast for a man to write them. Yet he had nearly turned the corner into the twentieth century, and there was not much further to go. Soon he'd be catching up to himself. He began to read:

With the coming of the Hard Times of 1894, hundreds of the city's workingmen lost their employment. The talk of Trusts, of the "Gold Bugs" of Wall Street, of the Gold Standard seemed to have no connection with their want. Many who had thriftily put aside savings saw their funds swept away by the failure of the Persepolis State Bank in March 1894. An angry mob of depositors stoned the bank, breaking out all its windows before the police could restore order. Many small merchants who had struggled to attain a place in the commercial life of the city were forced into bankruptcy, and added their bitterness to the general resentment. Bascomb's Emporium, since 1854 the leading general merchandise store of the city, closed its doors on August 8, 1894, and shortly thereafter its goods and furnishings were disposed of at a sheriff's sale. It was never reopened.

The failure of this and like establishments threw many more out of work. Bands of men paraded the streets with placards reading: "Give Us Work, Or Give Us Bread." And to the employed of the city itself were added laborers from the outlying farms who also asked for help. By the winter of 1894, riots took place in front of the Municipal Soup Kitchen. Many of the unemployed men slept during this period in some of the school buildings of the city, the authorities being either afraid or reluctant to exclude them. Among these people, the majority of them unskilled workers, were also a good many tramps, freebooters with little regard for the fate of others or for the fortune of the country on whose bounty they had lived for so many years. To their carelessness was laid the

blame for the burning of the Motley Street Grade School on December 7, when seventeen unfortunates were trapped and killed by flames. As a result of this catastrophe, the police of the city under the leadership of Mayor Abel Haskins no longer hesitated to exercise their authority and all of the unemployed who could not prove their residence in the city were conducted to the city-line and sent on their way across the countryside. Between such unemployed and the police fights were so frequent as to call forth alarmed comment from the editor of the Chronicle who, on New Year's Day, 1895, wrote: "The New Year begins in fear that the wave of discontent sweeping our nation may be fanned into open rebellion against properly constituted authority. In this very city the fire of insurrection smolders among the idle, the shiftless, and the vicious. Let these seek out again the Ragbaby Messiah, 'General' Coxey, to lead them to the National Capital and receive there the justice they deserve."

Here the editor was recalling the passage through the city in March, 1894, of Coxey's Army, "the petition in boots." Local troubles had been momentarily forgotten as the ragged members of the Commonwealth of Christ, as the army was named by its leaders, came into the city and found a camping place on the Flats close by the Iron Works. Here they set up their flag and pitched the large tent under which they sheltered. Crowds of citizens came as if to a circus or traveling medicine-show to view the strange sight, and many joined in the hymn-singing which followed the setting-up of the tent. The lectures by Coxey and his lieutenants were heard with rapt attention, and Coxey's plea for government road-building to give employment to thousands of idle workers was hailed with applause by many of the local workingmen. A harmless enough lot of men, they were unmolested by the police, who hoped that a good many of the local unemployed might be drawn off into the army. No more than half a dozen residents of the city, however, left with the army when it marched out of the city next morning on its fruitless journey to Washington. But the sight of such an army and the news of similar "industrial armies" on

the march suggested to many citizens the beginnings of insurrection against the government. They hailed therefore with approval and relief President Cleveland's sending of Federal regulars into Illinois on July 4, 1894. . . .

He heard a step in the hall, and he raised his head from the manuscript, the years of yesterday luminous in his memory as if all of them were drawing down to a single moment, a single point that waited to flash its meaning before it should wink out.

Then Josie's voice outside his door said: "Are you all right, Father? Your light. . . ."

"Just getting into bed, Josie," he said quickly. He knew she was waiting, and he put the pages back into his desk, snapped out the light, and got into bed with a good deal of bouncing around so that she would hear. "Good-night, Josie," he called with a hint of laughter in his voice.

"You think you're mighty smart," she said. "Good-night." Her footsteps went away down the hall.

But when he closed his eyes, he closed them on a battle, a never-ending battle, whirling from the fields and the streets into the very houses of the city, a battle in which he stood on the sidelines watching his fellow-citizens strike wildly at one another in the smoke and dust that rose from their trampling feet. "I was in it once," he said to himself. "Now I got to go back to it." Just before he fell asleep, it seemed to him that he saw Coxey's ragged army moving slowly on the muddy Pike and guns in ambush poking out at them from the bushes. He murmured to himself, and in a little while slept.

In the morning over the breakfast table after Tommy had left for school, they argued about how John should go down town. Josie wanted him to call Harvey up and make a definite appointment; there would be no sense in his going without one—Harvey just wouldn't be in to him.

"I'll take a taxi down and walk in on him," her father said firmly. "He'll see me if I'm there."

"Well, all right," she said doubtfully. "But please don't get excited when you talk to him, Father. . . . At least, let Francis drive you down and wait for you."

"Of course not," the old man said. "It'd be foolish to make Francis wait. . . . I can't tell how long I'll be."

When Josie went out to call the taxi, Francis asked: "What're you going to say to him?"

"I don't know, Francis. . . . All I know is I want him to settle this strike before there's more bloodshed. I keep thinking of Marius Schaeffer. . . ."

"If there was anything I could do—"

"What? . . . No, there's nothing you can do, Francis."

"You'll get nowhere with him," Francis said. "I know him."

"I've got to try." The old man was getting into his coat. "Here," he said, "straighten this sleeve out for me, will you, Francis?"

As Francis tucked the sleeve down into the pocket, Delia came in and said: "The taxi's waitin', Mister John."

"Good luck," Francis said.

The old man's thin hand touched his. "I hope so, Francis. . . . I feel as if I was going off to the wars." He went out and down the walk towards the waiting taxi.

He told himself as the car moved off that he had no faith in what he could do with Harvey. But he had to go just the same. As long as he was alive he would have to go and do what he ought to do. Like Marius. It was easy to sit and talk and talk about how bad this or that was, and it was hard to go and do something about it. But he had to go. He had to do something for his own sake, to prove he was not just a moving lump of mud. Something to do kept a man going, gave him a reason for being alive, and he thought suddenly of Francis shuffling around in his slippers, the stubble dark on his full pale face, his speech slow, his eyes dull. But would Francis have been happier, he asked himself, if he were working for Harvey now, maybe conniving with Harvey in schemes to club men down the way Marius had been clubbed down?

He realized that the taxi had stopped. The driver was saying: "Here we are, Mister," and John got out and paid him. His heart jumped when he turned towards the gray façade of the Bank because moving slowly past it was a line of men, their placards floating across the plate-glass windows that said in dull gilt: FARMERS & MECHANICS BANK—Est. 1835. He walked through the line and up the stairs. At the top of the flight he turned to look down at the pickets, and it was like looking down the years to the day when he had stood here and spoken to an army of people who clamored for the return of their money and their lives that he and Harvey had risked.

Abruptly he went into the Bank.

Archer, a look of surprise on his face, came up to him and said: "It's good to see you again, Mr. Cantrell."

"It's been a long time, Archer," the old man said. "Just tell Mr. Cantrell I'd like to see him, will you?" He looked around, recalling with flashing vividness Will's death on the mottled marble floor, the little group of people facing him angrily and demanding their money and their lives.

Archer came back. "He says to come right in, Mr. Cantrell."

Harvey greeted him pleasantly, and pulled a chair forward for him. "You sure you'll be comfortable in that?" he asked.

He didn't like Harvey's solicitude, and wondered if it were meant to put him in his place: an old old man who was bothering a young and busy one.

"I won't fall out of it, Harvey," he said.

Harvey smiled. "If you'll excuse me just a minute, John—there's a little matter here I have to finish up." He got back behind his desk, and picked up his pen over a sheaf of papers.

Showing me how busy he is, John told himself resentfully. Can't be bothered too long with an old fool. His anger stiffened him, and the doubts he had brought with him vanished.

After a minute or two Harvey laid down his pen and leaned back in his chair. "It's a funny thing," he said conversationally, "to be interviewed by your son for a newspaper. Phil was here

for a while before you came in, asking me for a statement about—" he hesitated, and concluded with a vague sweep of his arm in the direction of the windows—"about all this business out there."

He sounded mild and tired, and John saw a deep line come and go between his brows. He realized that Harvey had thinned a good deal. The bulk of his middle years had gone, and the skin had drawn tighter on his face so that his nose jutted out strongly. "All the Cantrells thin out when they get older," he said to himself, and realized with shocked astonishment that Harvey must be somewhere close to sixty.

Harvey was jiggling his pen. "It was always in my mind that some day Phil—" He broke off abruptly and said: "I told him that he should be here working with me instead of asking me what I was working at."

"What'd he say to that?" John asked curiously. It was a long time since he had seen Phil. "What'd he say?"

"He laughed. Said he was just a spectator and acting'd never interested him."

"Acting?"

"He meant that all this that's going on, everything that goes on, I guess, is just like a play to him. He watches it, he said—wait, I'll give you his exact words—'with the detachment of an artist.'" Harvey laughed wryly. "I don't know whether he means it or not—maybe it was said deliberately to provoke me. He'd got that knowing smile of his on all the time he was talking to me."

"Still got that bug, has he?" the old man murmured. "I remember once he talked that way to me, too."

Harvey said: "He wanted to know if I expected there'd be more fighting at the Works today because, he said, he thought it would be a great stunt to run a cable and a microphone down there and describe the fight over the radio while it was going on. . . . Said that the way to interest the boobs was to tell them how the other boobs were dying. Give them a thrill, he said. I don't know . . ." he shook his head slowly from side to side. "He told me once, years ago," he went on, "that he'd given his right leg to see the greatest

show on earth and that he was still watching the freaks in the side-show."

"You and me," John said, "freaks like you and me."

"Oh, sure," Harvey said, "he's 'way above us. He breathes the pure air of art with only a few." He made a gesture with his hand as if brushing Phil away. "It hurt me to see him when he came in, but I felt like kicking him when he went out. . . . I'm the last Cantrell to run this business and the Works, and maybe after I'm gone—" He stopped and went to the windows. He pointed towards the street, and said: "We used to come here every Fourth of July and watch the parade, all of us, the whole family. D'you remember?"

"I remember," John told him. He smoothed his empty sleeve, and watched Harvey's face at the window.

"It's not like it was," Harvey said. "Things have changed."

"Not so much," the old man said. "Not so much as you think." He wanted to tell Harvey that when Harvey was as old as he was, the years of his life would no longer seem separate, but would be all compact, narrowing down to the flashing moment of their meaning, but Harvey was turning from the window, his face gray and troubled, and saying:

"It's not like the old days any more, John." He sat down at his desk again.

"It's just like the old days, Harvey," the old man said. "Don't fool yourself. It's all the same little piece of time." He nodded towards the windows, and asked abruptly: "What's to be done, Harvey, about those men out there?" He saw the expression on Harvey's face change at once to something harsh and bitter.

"I know why you're here, John," he said, "but I can save you a lot of time by telling you right away that you can't say anything to make me change my mind."

"I got to talk to you just the same, Harvey."

"It's no use. I—"

John Cantrell went on steadily: "I know how you feel about the

business and all, but do you have to allow heads to be broken, maybe men to get killed because of your pride? Or because of your money?"

Harvey sat up straight in his chair. "I don't know what picture you've got of me in your mind, John—maybe a murdering monster from what you've just said. But when you come right down to it, I'm nothing more than a man who wants to run his own business in his own way. That's all."

"It isn't all machinery you're running in the Works, Harvey," the old man said quickly. "It's human beings, too. Men."

"Yes, yes," Harvey said impatiently, "I know. But no man has a right to interfere with the running of another man's business, nor any right to interfere with another man's work. If he tries to interfere, he's breaking the law." He sat back and said more calmly: "I can't see any other way of looking at it, John. It's not a matter of pride, or a matter of money. It's a plain matter of law and right."

"But if a man hasn't got enough to feed himself and his family with," the old man said slowly, "he's got a right to ask for enough. Even to fight for enough."

"Sure he has," Harvey told him briskly. "I don't deny it. . . . But if the money's not there to give, it's just too bad. He has to get on with what he has. . . ."

The noises of the street came up faintly to them, and the sunlight moved upon the buff wall.

"The money could be there, Harvey."

Harvey regarded him with an air of amused tolerance. "Now you're talking like a child, John. After all, I don't regulate the prices of my goods and the wages I pay. It's something far beyond me does that. All I know is that to keep the Works running, to keep people working, I have to change prices and wages sometimes. It's not my fault times are bad now. It's not any man's fault. It's the working of economic laws, and if I only knew, if any man only knew, how those laws worked—" He broke off and said in a different tone: "Don't forget that I've got stockholders to take care

of, and I have to protect their rights, too—your rights, John, unless you’ve forgotten that you own a good amount of stock in the Bank and the Works and the power-plant.”

“I don’t want blood money, Harvey,” the old man said slowly.

Harvey’s smile vanished. “That’s no way to talk, John. That’s the way your friend Schaeffer used to talk.”

The old man nodded. “It might be better for you to come to terms with the union, Harvey. You and the stockholders, all of us, could take less, it seems to me. And you’re losing money every day the men are out.”

“They’ll be back soon enough,” Harvey said icily.

“Maybe. But how about all the men that might get hurt, that might get killed in the meantime. Last night . . . ?”

Harvey stirred restlessly. “This talk’s getting us nowhere, John. It would be better if you just forgot about the whole business. When it’s over, I think you’ll see I’ve handled it right. There’s no sense your taking sides in it.”

“There shouldn’t be any sides,” the old man said. “There was never meant to be sides, and there doesn’t have to be.” His hand came up shakily across his mouth.

“You’re tired,” Harvey said. “Let me call a taxi for you, John. After all—” He picked up the telephone.

“But if I have to take sides, I—” the old man hesitated, and then said in a clear voice: “I’ll fight.”

“Fight? Fight who?”

“You, Harvey. Who do you think?”

Harvey laughed, and put down the telephone. “You going to stick a bayonet in me, John?”

The old man got to his feet. “I’m not joking, Harvey. I know what’s happened in other strikes in this city—hatred and suffering and men killed in the streets. I would not want that to happen again if I could prevent it.”

Harvey shrugged. “I don’t know what you can do about it,” he said. He watched the old man curiously.

“I would not want to split us apart, Harvey,” John said, “but it’s

been hard since Marius Schaeffer was killed for me to see eye to eye with you in your business methods."

"I'm sorry," Harvey said, "but I feel no responsibility for Schaeffer's death, and it's unjust to charge me with it. As for the handling of the business, that's entirely my affair. . . . Perhaps we'd better call this talk over."

"I'm going," John said. He cursed to himself the weakness of his years that made him tremble. But he pulled himself erect and said: "Harvey, I own a good piece of stock in all this"—he waved his hand about the room—"and I—"

"You haven't a thing to worry about," Harvey said quickly. "I can promise you that."

He saw that the old man had not heard him. He leaned forward and took like a blow, terrible in its piercing suddenness, John Cantrell's next words.

"I'm going to call a meeting of the stockholders," the shaky old voice said, "and ask an investigation of your handling of their affairs in relation to this strike." Wonderingly he watched the blood flow into Harvey's face and recede, leaving the skin white and strained.

Harvey's lips drew back from his teeth. "You're crazy! You're out of your mind!" he exclaimed.

"Unless," the old man went on, "you agree to meet the strikers and come to terms with them."

"Have you gone crazy?" Harvey said thickly. "You better get out!"

It was just as if he had run a bayonet into him, the old man thought wonderingly. He pressed forward the point again: "Couldn't your pride stand it if a committee was to check up on you, Harvey?"

Harvey's face twisted. "Do you want to ruin us all?" he said hoarsely.

The old man came up close to the desk and leaned over it. "What do you mean, Harvey? What do you mean—'ruin us all'? Do you know what you're saying?"

Harvey's head dropped, and he mumbled out some sentences in which John Cantrell heard the word "ruin" repeated several times. He could not fathom Harvey's behavior, and he looked down in slack-mouthed bewilderment at his cousin's gray head.

Harvey lifted his head suddenly, whispering: "Did anyone say anything to you about the Bank?" and then asked harshly: "Did someone put you up to it?"

"What's the matter with you, Harvey?" John asked. "You're the one that's crazy."

Harvey shook his whole body from side to side. Then he sprang to his feet and said in a high strained voice: "You'll ruin us all, do you hear? . . . Have you spoken to anyone else?"

The old man shook his head, and Harvey, his eyes feverish, stumbled around the desk, and seized his arm tightly. "Just forget the whole thing, will you, John? Just go home and forget the whole thing."

Shaken by Harvey's erratic gestures, his hot wandering glance, the old man blurted: "What's wrong, Harvey? Godalmighty, what's the matter with you?" and then the thought flashed upon him. "The Bank's in trouble! You've got it in trouble. What have you done?" and Harvey, still gripping his arm, broke into a rushing torrent of words about Wall Street and the market, South American bonds, German municipals, blue chip securities, assets frozen in real estate—not that he guessed for a minute that . . . he believed the upswing would come . . . he believed that, he had always believed it, he had never sold the country short, he had faith in it . . . a temporary recession, only temporary . . . it was only a matter of a few months . . . there could be no business without speculation . . . the country was made by taking risks. Risks . . . certainly a business man had to take risks. A few months, and he would be clear again, he rushed on, his face close to the old man's. An investigation would get nobody anything but ruin, ruin for the depositors, for the stockholders, for the Cantrells. "Including you, John, don't forget that! So just go home and forget the whole thing," he begged, pressing the thin

arm tightly in his fingers, his voice low and secret. "You will, John, won't you? Just leave everything to me!"

So Francis was right, the old man was thinking. Harvey had been caught in the market. God alone knew how much Harvey had lost of his own money and the Bank's. Perhaps, he reflected swiftly, had lost the Bank's trying to retrieve his. How, then, had he fooled the bank examiners? And the thought of the tortuous path that Harvey must have been following since October, the twisting, the juggling, the concealments and the evasions, suddenly struck him as if he himself were Harvey twisting and turning among the ledgers.

"I didn't know," Harvey was saying. "I thought all the promises the country had ever made were coming true. . . . I had to be in the parade of the country. . . . You remember how we had to fight Father?"

"I remember how your father died," the old man said clearly.

Fiercely Harvey whispered: "You don't blame me for that, too? You were with me then. Why have you turned against me now?"

Yes, why? the old man asked himself, and it seemed to him that all the voices of all the vanished dust of the city that he had drawn together in his manuscript answered for him: "I want men to be free," he said.

But he saw that Harvey was not listening to him, had shrunk back into himself, and that an icy look was fixed upon his gray face. "All right then, John," he said. "Organize your committee. . . . Let them find out that the Bank is ready to close its doors, that the Works are nearly bankrupt. . . . But it's not my fault. I did my best in my faith in the country, and if it didn't keep its promises to me, then I can't keep my promises to others. That's all there is to it." He waited for John's reply, but the old man did not speak. "You'll ruin us all," Harvey went on, "unless you give me a little time!"

"So it's nip and tuck with you, is it, Harvey?" the old man asked slowly.

"And with you, too. Don't forget that," Harvey said. "It's not

my money alone. It's the money of everybody who ever put a dollar with us . . . with me." He looked directly into the old man's eyes. "I took a chance—yes, I gambled. I gambled the way we both gambled on the power-plant. . . . So I've got to take the money back from the people that every manufacturer gambles for, takes chances for, works for. That's what it is. . . . If the Bank goes under, then the Works go under. And if they go under, then the people who work there, all of them, go under. It's them I'm trying to save as well as us." He spoke hurriedly as if to get his words into the old man's mind so quickly that he could not pause to doubt them.

"It's happened before," he said, "lots of times before. And it's not right I should pay alone for the risks I took for them, for everybody else." He bent forward to grasp John's arm again, and said in a slower, more even voice: "In eight months, besides other economies I'm putting in, I can save nearly two hundred thousand in wages. Provided I win this strike quick. . . . That's the whole thing in a nutshell, John." He turned and went back to his desk. "Now go organize your committee," he said, and picked up his papers.

The old man did not move. "The whole thing in a nutshell," he repeated, "seems to be that you're going to save them by clubbing and killing them." He nodded slowly. "Yes, and then by starving them."

"That's one way of looking at it." Harvey did not raise his head. "But think it over, John."

"Good-by," the old man said, and went out.

So it's up to me, he told himself, walking carefully across the smooth marble floor. As simple as that—it's all in my hand, seeing his hand pressed against the revolving door and turning him out into the warm spring sunlight. A few words spoken in random spite had delivered Harvey into his hand, had also delivered all the men in the Iron Works into his hand, had delivered into his shaky fingers all the people who believed in the Cantrells' integrity.

He went slowly down the stairs toward the irregular motion of

the Square. On the sidewalk he looked at the faces of the men pacing back and forth with the placards, and he wondered if they knew what their power was, the power that the Declaration of Independence had asserted and that the Constitution had confirmed. If they could only know what their power was and not suffer it to be taken away from them by the cunning men, the hard men who used them, then they could prevent the hammer-blow that periodically crushed them on the anvil. But you could not teach them by talking to them—he stood on the curb and wondered where the taxi-stand was—Marius had found that out. No, only their own anguish under the careless hammer could teach them. And they had been learning their lesson a long time now—yes, a long time, he mused, thinking of the pages on which he had written without thinking of their meaning, the story of their struggle on the long road while the hammer of chance hung poised over them to crush them on the anvil of time. It took them a long time to learn, but they learned all the time, he told himself, how to use their faith and their strength to the making and the remaking of their freedom so that the hammer might not fall upon them again.

He stood dreamily on the curbstone, feeling the warm sunlight strike against his face and shoulders. So he would end this strike. There would be no killing. Men would not die in the streets at the hands of their fellows with whose lives their own lives had made the life of the city, one and indivisible. Better their common suffering than that by division and battle they should breed hatred and murder of one another.

He muttered to himself, and a man standing next to him asked: "What'd you say, Mister?"

"Just wondering what's going to happen," the old man said.

The man waved down the sidewalk. "There's gonna be trouble, that's what," he said.

John saw that the pickets had drawn together at the farther end of the sidewalk and were moving away in a compact group. "What're they going to do?" he asked.

"I dunno," the other said. "But I heard somebody say there was fightin' beginnin' again down at the Works."

He turned and made off in the direction of the bobbing placards, and after a moment of hesitation John followed him. He hurried along as fast as he could until the crowd, their faces stretched towards the pickets in curiosity and fear, thickened around him. He reached forward and touched the shoulder of one of the pickets who carried his placard slanted back over his shoulder as if it were a gun. "Excuse me," he said when the man turned around, "but I just wanted to ask you—what's going on?"

"A fight, I guess," the man said. "Another fight down at the Works." He looked curiously at the old man's empty sleeve. "I wouldn't go down there if I was you, Mister."

He turned around again, and Amby Tait asked quickly: "Who was it, Louie? What did he want?"

Louie hunched his shoulders. "Just an old guy . . . wanted to know what's going on." He frowned. "I've seen him around somewhere." He quickened his step. "Come on, Amby. Show a little speed."

Amby caught at his elbow. "Louie. . . . It looks like the real thing this time, huh? D'you hear about Joe and Indie? . . . I nearly dropped dead when I heard it on the radio last night."

"It's tough," Louie said. "I mean, for Indie. Joe knew what he was doing, but Indie—well, he'd've been better off if he'd stuck with us instead of going with Joe."

"The old gang's nearly all broken up now," Amby said, his eyes melancholy. Ahead of them they saw the strikers massed opposite the police and deputies on the sidewalks across the street. "Indie and Joe dead, and Al Schaeffer fightin' us. . . . There's only you an' me left."

"And Dave Bandler," Louie said absently, his look straining ahead.

"No," Amby said. "Because he's goin' away, leavin' town with his whole family. I met him downtown the other day, and he told me."

Louie did not answer. His mouth was dry, his heart was beating hard. He saw that some of the cops were holding rifles, and he could feel the tension that stretched between the sidewalks. "It's the real thing today, all right," he said to Amby, but Amby had drifted a little way from him and was talking to Sam Gill. He wondered when the battling would start. If anything should happen to him, at least Irene and the baby would be all right. Her folks would take care of them. He didn't want to die in the street like a dog, but if he had to fight he would. No running away. . . .

Amby tugged at his arm. "Y'know what Sam just told me? Y'know what? We're gonna go through the cops, an' set up the picket line just the same!"

"Who says so?"

"It's the truth," Amby said. "They decided while we were up in front of the Bank. . . . That's why they told us to come back."

"But how—?" Louie jerked his head at the group across the street.

"We're just gonna march ahead. No fightin', no sluggin', just marchin' like a parade right through them no matter what they do."

"I'm going to see what Barney says," Louie said abruptly. He pushed his way down the sidewalk, with Amby trailing after him.

The men around Hanagan were talking in low voices, their eyes lifting occasionally from the line of police and deputies towards the gray bulk of the Works. ". . . not straight across," Barney was saying, "because they'd box us in, but angle down across the lots where we c'n move around." He caught Louie's glance. "Well, you started somethin', Louie."

Louie grinned self-consciously, and started to answer, but a loud voice booming from across the street pulled their heads up, and they stared at the big man advancing from the opposite sidewalk to the middle of the road. "Men!—give me your attention a minute!" he shouted again.

The crowd fell silent.

"There's an injunction against you men that orders you not to

assemble on any of the following streets:"—he looked down and read from a slip of paper in his hand—"East River, Tremayne, Magill, Brewster; Warner Avenue; Ludlow Court, Durfey's Alley." At the mutter that went up from the strikers, he held up his hand. "Now, men, I ask you to behave like citizens who respect the law and stay off these streets. Otherwise, it is the duty of these officers here to arrest all or any one of you."

"Who is this?" Louie asked in a low voice.

"Somebody from the City Hall, I think," Barney told him. "What the hell's the difference?"

"I ask you all to disperse now," the man said, "because you are on a street that the law has closed to you and you are all subject to arrest." He turned and walked stolidly back to the line of policemen.

The silence still held.

"If they get away with this, we're done," Louie muttered.

Hanagan nodded. "Yeah." He turned to the strikers massed behind him, and yelled: "What're we waitin' for? . . . Let's go!" and then in a slow irregular wave the strikers came off the sidewalk in a long oblique slant towards the lots where the kids played baseball. The police and deputies moved back slowly, angling their line so as to confront the strikers. The voice across the street yelled something, but was flung back and lost in the steady shuffle of the men's march.

Around John Cantrell the voices of the onlookers murmured: "Now it's beginnin'. . . . There's gonna be trouble. . . There's gonna be a battle."

Yes, a battle, the old man told himself fearfully, catching the gleam of sunlight along the rifle barrels and the lines confronting each other. His heart jumped when the strikers surged out into the road.

He heard somebody say: "We better beat it maybe. There's gonna be shootin' . . . killin'."

He wanted to leave, but hesitated, and then, when the two lines

had drawn off some distance down the street, he started after them. Hurrying to catch up, he began to pant.

A voice from the street called to him: "Want a lift?" and he saw Phil Cantrell leaning out of a small car with *The Persepolis Chronicle* painted in white on the door.

The old man nodded, trying to catch his breath. The car pulled up beside him, and he crowded in beside Phil and the other man who held a camera in his lap.

"We can see it better from the other side," Phil said, and sent the car twisting through the streets till they came out on Tremayne Street bordering the farther side of the lots. Phil slowed up, and they had a clear but distant view of the opposing lines, the police and deputies still dropping back, the strikers now bunched tightly together moving against them. "A bullet in that crowd'll do the work of a dozen," Phil said.

The photographer grunted in agreement.

"Do you really think there'll be shooting, Phil?" The old man's mouth was shaking a little.

"Sure," Phil said. "Say," he went on, "we—the two of us, I mean—seem to get together at these little gatherings." He saw that the old man looked puzzled. "Remember the fight back in 1920—New Year's Day?" he asked. "The day that what's-his-name got killed?"

"I remember," John Cantrell said.

"Well, here we are again," Phil said brightly. He stopped the car and waved his hand toward the lot where the space between the lines was slowly narrowing. "See your evening paper for further details." He nudged the photographer. "Right, Mike?"

Mike grunted. "This is a hell of a spot," he said. "I'm just wasting good film at this distance."

"Then save it," Phil told him. "There'll be plenty of good pictures when the battle's over."

"I thought I'd get a good mob shot," Mike said. He fiddled with the camera in his hands.

"Don't worry," Phil said. "You'll get plenty." He nudged the other again, and with a lift of his eyebrows indicating the old man peering out across the lot, muttered from the corner of his mouth: "There's a portrait study for you, Mike."

The photographer leaned forward to look at the old face, the cheeks brown-splotched, the eyes blank and sunk deep in their sockets. "Yeah," he said, "but don't go arty on me now. I gotta get some pictures." He pointed down the street towards the row of shabby houses that leaned towards the lot. "Look—if we can get upstairs in that first dump there, I could get me a good shot. It's an angle, but it's high. What say?"

"You've got something there," Phil said. "C'mon, then. We'll have to move fast." He scrambled out from behind the steering wheel, and Mike followed him. Phil turned to the old man. "Look, Cousin John, we'll be back in a little while. You'll wait for us, huh?" He waited for the old man's absent nod, and then wheeled and trotted after Mike who was already a good way down the street.

John Cantrell sat for a couple of minutes peering across the lot until he saw that the police and the deputies, backed up against the high fence of the Iron Works were now extending their line down the fence, the sunlight hitting their rifles, while the strikers inched slowly forward. He heard no yells, no shouts. The air was as still and heavy as death, and he said abruptly: "There'll be bloodshed in a minute!" In the next moment he had fumbled open the door of the car and was running across the sidewalk and over the weed-grown border of the lot, his feet clattering among the tin cans. As he ran with short uneven steps, he heard a distant urgent calling of his name. He knew it was Phil, but he ran forward without pausing. His heart pounded, stopped, fluttered irregularly, and pounded again. The rifles were lifted, and he panted, his mouth gaping open, and tried to call out. From far away he heard his name called again. His mind whirled up the memory of Marius, and suddenly it seemed to him that the part of him that had died with Marius had come alive again. His coat sleeve had worked out

of his pocket and was flapping against him as he came to the crowd of strikers. He veered around them towards the open space that still lay, narrowing step by step, between them and the police.

But already the rifles were thrust forward, already a hoarse cry formed and dissolved on the quiet air, and the strikers were charging.

The old man, a little in advance of the strikers' flank, cried out: "Stop! . . . In God's name!" He flung his hand up. "Godalmighty, you'll kill each other! Your blood—on each other's heads!" and saw the rifles come up, and heard the strained breathless cries, the faces before him pale and stiff as if already in death. The rifles went off, and he ran on a little, his hand still outstretched, until a bullet struck into his breast, knocking him sideways before he toppled to the scarred ground. . . .

In the whirl of the charge, Amby let himself be carried forward. It was like a dream, he thought, and he turned his head quickly, looking for Louie's face, but Louie was gone, and he felt lost and afraid. He was wedged in so tightly that he could not lift his arms, could hardly breathe, and he struggled wildly to free himself till suddenly the mass about him loosened, and he was plunging against the fence. He pushed himself back, and somebody grappled with him, trying to fling him to the ground. Amby fought, squealing a little, trying to lock the other's arms that drove short hard blows against his belly. He butted up frantically, and felt a shock that made his cheekbones tingle. The body against him went slack, and he stepped back and let the other slide down. He saw that it was a cop, and he reared back in guilt.

A spinning group of men crashed into him and threw him aside. He was locked against the fence again, and the rough boards scraped his arms. He realized with astonishment that his shirt was shredded, and then a rifle barrel struck him across the shoulders with such force that he groaned: "You broke my back!" He wheeled with arms uplifted to shield his head from another blow, but the rifle did not fall again, and he sobbed in relief.

He began to run down the length of the fence, his mouth agape,

his eyes half-closed, shrinking as he ran. But again the battle broke about him, and everything whirled in a crazy confusion of sky and ground, grunts and cries, and the entangled bodies of men falling past him, their faces rigid as stone, or jerking in their blood on the ground. The fighting had broken up into groups scattered all along the fence, and he ducked in and out among the men, his body twitching every time a gun went off. Then a man threw himself across his knees, and he went rolling over. He came up into a crouch, and saw Al Schaeffer, his mouth blood-smearred, plunging against him. He clutched at Al's legs, and jerked him off his feet. As Al crashed down, Amby twisted over on him, but he could not hold the bulky body, his blows were too anxious, and Al turned him so that for a moment they lay side by side, staring with hate and pain into each other's eyes.

Al's hands fastened on Amby's throat, and he mumbled between his smashed lips: "Killed my father, you bastard! Think I didn't know—think I forgot!" while he tightened his grip on Amby's throat, not feeling the clawing of Amby's fingers upon his wrists, nor the blows of Amby's knees against his belly.

Amby tried to speak, but only a hoarse whistling came out of his mouth. He tried to say: "Al, don't. . . . I'm tryin' to make it up to your father. . . . That's why I'm here. . . . It's why I'm strikin'. . . . To make it up to him for what I did. . . ." and so clearly were the words in his throat that he believed he had spoken them. But when he bit down on his tongue protruding from his blue lips, the fear of death set strongly in him against the iron ring on his throat, and he threw himself back with convulsive strength, carrying Al over with him and breaking Al's grip. He gulped air as if it were something solid to chew on, and gasped out: "Please—" before Al's fist between his eyes knocked him half-senseless.

While the battle whirled around them, Al, his body rigid, beat at the face under him, murmuring between the blows that flattened the nose and battered the cheekbones: "You never thought I'd get even, huh? You never thought!" and the thought of his betrayed and murdered father invaded his mind, and he was getting even

for all the pain his father had known, and then getting even for all the pain he himself had known after all the years of faith that had brought him to this moment.

But when he looked down, something in the lolling head turned sidewise by his last blow, something in the bloodstained eyes reminded him of his father's lolling bloody head. And suddenly it was as if he had been murdering his father, as if this was his father's face upon which he was taking his revenge. He hung poised over the face beneath him, glaring wildly, and then flung himself up with a cry and stumbled blindly away, muttering: "A hole in the wall . . . a hole in the wall . . ." till someone jerked at his arm and said: "Relax, buddy—it's over now."

"It's lucky we rushed 'em," Louie panted. His head was flung back to stop his nosebleed. "Or the rifles would've killed us all."

"Hurry up," Sam Gill said, "this guy's gettin' heavy."

Between them sagged a body, and Louie halted a moment to get a better grip on the legs. He spat the blood from the back of his throat, and threw his head up again, staring at the blue cloudless sky. "Did we get 'em all?" he asked.

"Not yet." Gill looked back over his shoulder. "No. They're still pickin' 'em up. . . . Here's the jalopy."

As they came up to the car, two men, one with a camera, came running towards them. "Hold it a minute, willya, fellers?" the photographer begged.

"Screw away from here," Gill said. He opened the door of the car and helped Louie get the body into the back seat. Blood dripped from Louie's nose as he bent forward.

The other man with the photographer said excitedly: "Did you see an old man back there—an old man with only one arm?"

"Are you nuts?" Louie asked. "Get going," he said to Gill. The car jerked away from the curb.

"Hospital?"

"No," Louie said. "Paper said this morning it's full up with guys that were hurt last night. Go back to the hall. At least there's

cots there." He bent over the smashed bloody face and said: "Amby . . . ?"

Inside the hall pale sunlight streamed through the windows and streaked the dusty floor. The cots sagged under the weight of the men, and a smell of dust and vomit and blood eddied in the room. Occasionally a man groaned.

"You'll have to lay him on the floor, Louie," Hanagan said. "The cots are all filled up. . . . Doc McKenna's here"—he pointed to a figure moving among the cots near the platform—"and Jackson and Pierce'll be here soon—I hope. I got guys out tryin' to round up some more doctors." He touched the blue bruise on his forehead. "Some battle, Louie."

"I know a doctor I can get," Louie said. "If he's in town."

He started to go, but Hanagan put his hand on his arm. "You better not come back, Louie. I been tipped off the cops might be up to arrest everybody in the place."

"I'll be back," Louie said. He went out, pushing his way through the crowd that was collecting in front of the building, and drove Sam's car up to Dave Bandler's house.

When he rang, Harriet came to the door. "I'm sorry," she said, "but Dave's not seeing any patients. He's leaving town."

"But I got to see him," Louie said. "I got to—this is an emergency." He saw Dave over his wife's shoulder. "You have to come, Dave. We had a terrible fight down at the Works—we got the union hall full of guys who got hurt, maybe dying for all I know."

"Come in here. Quick!" Dave said.

"Dave, you can't!" Harriet said. "We—"

He brushed by her. "I'll be back soon." He summoned Louie to follow him into his bare, dismantled office, and snatched up a hammer. "Here"—he pointed—"break that case open. The small one." He tugged another case from the wall and forced the boards up with a chisel. He unwrapped instruments from both cases and threw them into a bag, then went into the examination room. "It's lucky I didn't pack this stuff, I was going to give most of it away anyway," he called out, and came back with a cardboard carton,

loaded with rolls of tape, bandages, and miscellaneous boxes and bottles. "Take this out to the car," he told Louie, grabbed his bag, and hurried out into the hall where Harriet was waiting.

"Dave?" she said.

"Yes, what is it?" he asked impatiently, not slackening in his stride.

"Never mind. . . . Nothing," she said.

"Now, Harriet—" he began, but she turned away from him and went down the hall.

In the car he asked: "What happened at the Works?" and whistled softly when Louie told him. "Step on it," he said. The crowd had thickened around the entrance to the building. "Look—another doctor!" someone said as they went in.

They climbed the stairs in silence, but when they got to the doors Louie said clumsily: "If it's all the same to you, Dave, Amby Tait's hurt as bad as anyone. Could you . . . ?"

"Where is he?" Dave asked. "I thought that you and he—"

"Over here." Louie led him to the north wall where they had laid Amby down. Someone had tucked a rolled-up coat under his head. The blood had dried on his face. As they bent over him, he moaned.

Dave knelt down beside him. "Some beating," he said. "Poor guy." He looked up at Louie. "No hot water, I suppose?"

Louie shook his head.

"I can get on without it." Dave motioned him to put down the cardboard carton of supplies. "I'll clean him up," he said.

Louie watched him work. Every once in a while Amby's body twitched. Then Dave said: "A badly fractured nose. . . . Multiple contusions. The hospital's the—"

"He's coming to!" Louie said.

Amby's eyelids fluttered up. His pulpy lips moved. "Louie . . . ?"

"Yeah, Amby. Here I am." He dropped to his knees. "You're okay, Amby. You'll be all right, kid."

"My head . . . it hurts."

"Yeah, but don't worry, kid."

Amby moaned again. He mumbled: "I made up for it. . . . I belong now, huh? . . ." He rolled his head from side to side. "It hurts. . . ."

Louie looked up pleadingly at Dave.

"He should be in the hospital," Dave said. "But I can dope him up." He prepared a hypodermic, swabbed Amby's arm, and let the needle in smoothly. "He'll go off soon, Louie. . . . We better look at the others."

As they moved away, Louie looked back. "He'll live, huh, Dave?" he asked timidly.

Dave nodded as Barney Hanagan came up to them. "Thanks for comin', Doc," he said. "Regular hospital, ain't it?"

"Sure is." Dave touched McKenna's shoulder as he went by him. "Here's your hospital, Mac," he said.

McKenna gave him a quick smile. "You said a mouthful, Dave."

"This one," Barney said.

The cot sagged under the weight of the body. Dave bent over quickly, and laid back the coat and vest. When he lifted the body a little to get it clear of the clothes, a trickle of blood came from the nose. Dave shook his head, and rummaged in his bag.

Louie watched him work. "The union could use a guy like you steady, Dave," he said idly. He turned at a touch on his shoulder.

It was Sam Gill. "There's a dame back here cryin' for you, Louie. . . . Out on the landin'."

"Irene!" Louie said. He spun about and hurried down the length of the hall.

On the dim landing, Irene came hard into his embrace, running her hands over his head. "Are you all right, Louie? Are you? . . . I heard about the fighting on the news flashes. I got so frightened I thought I'd die." Her body shook, and he stroked her back, his mouth against her temple.

After a moment he said: "It was over in no time, Irene. I'm sorry you were frightened."

"Frightened! I thought I'd go crazy." She drew back a little and peered up into his face. "How long will this go on, Louie? It's terrible."

He shook his head. "I don't know, Irene. I wish I did. . . ."

"I'm afraid," she told him. "I want to be with you. The baby and I, we should be with you. Always. I don't care what anyone says, I don't care where we live or how."

His heart leaped in exultation, and he held her tightly against him.

"They began talking to me last night about how you had deserted me, Louie, and then I realized I had deserted you. . . . But you can't blame them," she said quickly.

"I got nothing against them," he said. "Our minds don't run on the same track, that's all."

"You're good, Louie . . . I love you."

"And I love you, Irene," he told her.

She said: "When this—this strike is over, we'll get a place, two rooms, one even, I don't care." She gulped. "Is there any more danger, Louie? Will you have to fight again?"

"I don't know, Irene . . . I will if I have to," he said. "Till we can all make a new start." He looked at her soberly. "We got to make a new start. All together. All of us pulling for each other."

She did not understand him. "Yes, Louie. You and me and the baby—we'll do it. We will."

"I been thinking a lot the past few days," he said. His voice deepened, and she looked up in the dusty light searching for the expression on his face. "We and the rest. . . ." he said. "It's not like the old days any more. Not like the days we read about when Miss Cantrell used to teach us history. That was a different kind of time. . . . In that time a man was alone because the country was too big. So he had to do everything by himself. You know . . . raise crops, and build his own house, and things like that. It was every man for himself in those days. Now it's a squeeze to make things fit. You see what I mean, Irene? . . . Now a man can't

move without bumping into the next man. So we all got to make a new start and move in time with one another. Like a parade, that's what I mean."

"Like a nice Fourth of July parade," she said. "Remember when we were kids, Louie? . . . Louie, come home now!" she exclaimed suddenly. "Before it starts again. Please, Louie, I'm frightened."

"I got to stay, Irene," he said. "You know I got to."

"Then promise me, you'll be careful. If there's more fighting—"

"Sure," he said. "I'll be careful." He thought of Amby's battered face and the men stretched out on the floor. "But if I have to fight, I will," he told her, moving slowly away.

"I know," she said sadly. She came up close to him and kissed his cheek. He watched her go down the dim staircase. Halfway down she stopped and waved. "Be careful, Louie. . . ."

He waved back to her, and went into the hall past the low-voiced clusters of men, his look picking up Dave Bandler bending over a man.

As he came up, Dave said: "Look, Louie, will you hold this guy's arm still for a minute? I got to bandage it up."

"Sure," Louie said. He knelt beside the cot and seized the corded arm firmly. It jerked in his grasp, but he held it tight and watched Dave's quick hands.

"That'll hold him a while," Dave said. He rose and picked up his bag. "Let's take the next one."

"You're having a regular field day, Dave," Louie told him.

Dave bent over the next man whose breath came bubbling from his smashed mouth. The eyes pleaded with him to be gentle. "Don't worry, Mister," he said. He poured alcohol onto a swab of cotton and began to wipe the blood away. "This'll need stitches," he said as the deep-cut lips began to show under the smooth strokes of the swab.

"A boot did that," Louie said.

Dave's head was bent over his bag, looking for sutures and needle. He said in a low voice: "What did you mean a while ago, Louie?—you could use a guy like me."

"Sure. Unions have their own doctors, don't they?" He watched Dave's fingers draw the sutures into the curved needle. "There's not much money in it," he said. "And no glory either, I guess."

"No. No money and no glory," Dave said.

"But it's an idea, huh, Dave?"

Dave turned the man's head toward the light.

"Can I do something?" Louie asked.

Dave nodded. "Get behind him and hold his head steady while I sew."

Louie got down on his knees, took the man's head between his hands, and held it firmly.

"Back a little," Dave said, and began to put stitches into the lips. The man groaned, but lay still. "Then you better get me the job, Louie." His hands moved slowly over the man's mouth.

Louie stared at him. "I told you there was no money and no glory in it," he said.

"I can get by," Dave said. He straightened up. "Okay. . . . Let's take the next one." He was thinking that he must have been a little crazy last summer, crazy to have gambled for money and glory. The wrong things, his father had told him long long ago, and he remembered Morris bending forward over the chessmen, saying: "A game where it looks like you're lost, and you're discouraged, and all of a sudden you see that even if you can't win, you don't have to lose," his hard white hand hanging over the chessmen.

He looked around at the bare hall, the flags over the platform hanging dusty and wilted, the light-brackets tarnished, the small-paned windows struggling against the sunlight. About him drifted the smell of sweat and blood, and he heard the intermittent groans and muttering of the injured men. The men standing along the walls did not move, and as he looked at their dim shapes they seemed to be petrified men, still and dead as stone. Dead on their feet, he told himself. But he heard the steady murmur of their voices, their voices that breathed the sour bitter air, and he thought: Neither money, nor glory.

The furniture packed, the tickets bought, his folks waiting for him to begin again in strange faraway Palestine, the promised land. And he knew he was not going. He had to stay. All the time I was thinking of myself, he thought, and how I could please myself. And I was crazy because the country, the city would not pay me what I wanted. I thought it was breaking its promises to me, but all the time I was the one who owed—

Louie's voice said: "Wake up, Dave," and he realized he was standing by a cot looking down at the man on it, without seeing him.

"A fine time to be dreaming," he said, and stooped over the body. "Looks like a broken arm . . . it must've been some battle, Louie." His heavy surgical scissors slit up the man's sleeve. "I'll need your help with this one, too."

"Okay, Dave, you're the boss."

Dave pulled splints out of his bag.

"Is it bad, Doc?" the man said. "Is it bad?"

Dave shook his head. "It'll be all right." If they need me, he told himself as he picked out the splints, then I need them. I got to help this city keep its promises to everybody, not just to me. I got no right to ask it, to expect it for myself alone. He frowned as he thought of Harriet. It would be a terrible blow to her when he told her that they were not going. It would take a long time to explain to her. He could not blame her for wanting herself and him and the children free, but he did not want, he had never wanted his freedom by running away. He would not get the freedom he wanted to be everything he could be, to do everything he could do, by looking for it in another promised land. He would have to make his freedom here and now. A man had to be free inside before he could be free outside. He fitted the splints along the man's arm, and then laid them down. "These'll do," he said. "You'll have to help while I set it, Louie."

The man groaned: "You won't hurt me, Doc? Don't—"

"Listen!" Louie said.

They heard the rising wail of sirens.

"It's the ambulances," Dave said. "About time."

Louie touched his arm. "Did you mean it, Dave, what you said? About being our doctor? Because if you did—"

"I told you to fix it up, didn't I?" Dave said.

"I will, Dave. I promise I will."

"It looks as if I'm doing pretty well already," Dave said.

"It's like I was saying to my wife a while ago," Louie said. "We —" He stopped and nodded down the hall. "It wasn't the ambulances," he said stolidly. "It's the cops."

The men along the walls stood quietly as the solid cluster of police moved down upon them.

"So long, Dave," Louie said. "I'll be seeing you."

"I'll stay and finish up here, Louie," Dave promised him. "I'll stay. . . ."

WHEN she turned away from the telephone, he saw how pale she had got, and he came forward quickly, asking: "Josie, who was it? What's the matter?"

"Hurry, Francis!" Her voice shook. "It was Phil Cantrell. He says Father's been hurt. He got in a fight between the strikers and the police. He's badly hurt. We have to hurry."

"I'll get the car," he said and ran out, thinking that he should not have let the old man go alone, he should have gone with him to get him safely home.

Josie was waiting on the driveway for him as he backed the car out of the garage. "I've just called Doctor Merkle," she said. "We're to pick him up." She got into the car. "I'm frightened, Francis. The way Phil talked—"

"Don't worry, Josie," he said, but his heart was already mourning at the fear and sorrow in her look. "I'll drive as fast as I can." He turned the car into the street.

When they picked up Doctor Merkle, he said: "Now, Josie, you're not to worry until we see there's cause. Your father's a tough old man. . . ."

She did not answer, but bent forward a little as if to push the car

ahead faster. Francis had to slow up in Congress Square because it streamed with people coming from the direction of the Flats, and they saw that some of the men, their clothing torn and their faces blood-smeared, trotted draggily, looking back over their shoulders every so often. "Terrible . . . terrible," Josie said. "I'm frightened, Francis. . . ."

He turned the car out of the Square down towards the Flats. "Where'd Phil say he was?" he asked.

"The lot off Tremayne Street," she told him shakily. "He said you'd know. . . ."

"I know," Francis said, and slowed the car as they came into sight of the Works and the trampled fields where men moved slowly, staring down at the figures lying at their feet, or staggered under the burden of the slack bodies they carried. Police were herding the strikers they had rounded up towards the ambulances and patrol-wagons halfway down the street. Laid out on the sidewalk were about a dozen men, and Josie's sick look could not turn away from them. They lay jumbled as if the ragpickers had accumulated them from the dump, and only the languid movement of a head or the convulsive jerk of a leg proved that some of them were still alive. She wrenched her gaze away and looked beyond them, then exclaimed, and seized her husband's arm. "There's Phil!"

Phil jerked open the door of the car. "Did you bring the doctor?"

"Yes. . . . Where's Father?" Josie asked him. "Is he—?"

Phil led them across the sidewalk to the littered border of the field. "I can't say," he told her. "The doctor'll know. . . . I didn't let anybody touch him," but Francis caught his troubled look and thought: It's all over with the old man. A shame. A shame to die in a dump.

"Where that man is standing," Phil said. He pointed towards Mike who stood awkwardly in a little depression in the field, his camera dangling from his hand, his head bent in contemplation of what lay at his feet.

He stepped back as they came up. "There he is," he whispered.

"He hasn't come to. . . ." and at Phil's swift gesture moved quickly away, while out of the little gully Josie's choked cry rose and seemed to hang on the air a long time.

Kneeling, she stared at her father's shrunken face with all her life in her eyes as if with the very power of her look to force up the veined puckered lids and draw together the loose-sprawled limbs. Then she looked at the doctor whose fingers were on the old man's wrist. "Is he—?" she mumbled.

"No, but—I'm sorry, Josie—he hasn't long," he said.

"I wanted to say good-by to him." She put her hand to her trembling mouth.

Doctor Merkle undid her father's coat and vest and laid them back, and at sight of the splotch of blood on the shirt, Francis, standing behind Josie, touched her shoulder. "Josie?" he murmured, but she did not respond to his touch.

She stiffened as the doctor's scissors slit up the shirt and under-shirt and exposed the round blood-encircled hole just above the dark withered nipple. "I'll try to bring him to, Josie," he said.

While he filled the hypodermic needle from the little vial, Josie's hand moved on her father's head, brushing from it the dirt of the field. She saw the needle going into the thin arm, and looked into the doctor's eyes.

"Soon, I hope," he said. "It's his lung." His fingers sought John Cantrell's pulse in the ridged tendons of the wrist.

Francis murmured: "The ambulances are here. . . . The hospital?"

The doctor shook his head, his fingers still on the pulse. "In a little while now," he said. He bent over the shrunken face, and the lids came up.

"Father!" Josie cried out.

Francis knelt beside her.

"Father!" Josie said again.

John Cantrell said weakly, but clearly: "Josie. . . ." He stopped. "Francis?"

"I'm here, Father," Francis said.

The eyes closed and opened again. "This is it?" he asked in recognition of Doctor Merkle.

The doctor nodded. "This is it, John."

The old eyes clouded over. "I don't feel good," he said querulously.

"No, John," the doctor said.

"Where's the boy?"

"He's at school, Father," Josie said.

He lay without speaking. A trickle of blood appeared at the corner of his mouth. Josie's look turned frantically to the doctor. He leaned forward and wiped the blood away.

The shuffle of the men in the street came clearly across the field. The old man's eyes opened wide. "Who are the people marching by?" he asked.

"Never mind, Father, it's just some men," Josie said.

"Who are they?" the old voice asked petulantly. "Are they having a parade?"

No one answered him.

"Are they having a parade?" the thin voice asked again.

"Yes, they are having a parade," Josie said.

"What are they marching for . . . ? What are they celebrating?"

"It's not a celebration, Father. They are just marching."

"Tell me," the voice insisted. "People don't march for nothing. Is it Independence Day?"

"No, Father. It is not Independence Day."

"Then why are they marching?"

"They are not marching any more now. They have been taken—they have gone away," she said.

"I can still hear them," he said. "Why are they marching?"

Josie looked pleadingly at the doctor.

"A little lightheaded," he told her.

The old voice began again. "They are marching, but there is no music."

"Hush, Father. Please!"

"What kind of parade is it without music?"

"Parades like this don't have music, Father," she said desperately.

His head lolled a little towards her. He seemed to listen. "Josie?" he asked.

"Yes, Father," she said eagerly, "what is it?"

His expression changed again. He said: "If there is no music, it is not a parade, it is an army. . . . I heard shooting."

She did not answer.

"Are the armies fighting?"

"No, it is only a parade that is breaking up," she said.

He asked, his voice for the first time faltering: "Is it men shooting men—is it Americans shooting Americans? Tell me."

"Yes, Father," she said steadily.

"Then it is the Civil War. Is this battle called Antietam?"

"No, Father," she said, her voice very low.

"Talk up, Josie," he said impatiently. "Is this battle called Antietam?"

"That battle was over long ago, Father."

His body jerked a little. "But they are still shooting one another. . . . It is not over then."

"No," Josie said. "Then it is not over."

He asked in a different voice: "Francis? Where's Francis?"

"Here I am, Father."

"It's my fault, Francis. . . . You and the boy, I want you to make it up for me."

"Yes," Francis said. "Yes, we'll do whatever you want, whatever you say. Just tell me. . . ."

"It's my fault," the old voice said feebly. "I could've stopped the fighting . . . long ago. . . ."

Josie exclaimed: "Hush, Father! Don't talk. . . ."

"Why should he be quiet now?" Francis said sharply to her.

She saw the doctor nod at Francis's words, and she clasped her father's fingers, her head bowed low, her body slumping down.

The old voice struggled on. "What've I been saying? I think I'm going to die. . . . Francis, listen to me."

"I'm listening," Francis said strongly. "Tell me. . . ."

"Francis"—the voice stopped, and began again a little louder—"you can't go on this way, Francis. . . . I wondered a long time about you."

"Tell me then. . . . Tell me quickly."

"You'll have to be free . . . if you don't want to die, Francis." The blood bubbled in his breath, and he choked a little.

"Yes," Francis said. "Yes. Tell me quickly now." He heard Josie sobbing beside him. "Hush," he told her. He waited, eagerly watching the clear eyes and the pale lips.

"There's still work to do . . . a battle to fight," John Cantrell said. "But not for yourself alone . . . for all men together, Francis."

"Would you have me in office again? To work—to fight for men?" Francis asked. "Is that what you're tellin' me? Is that it now?" His eyes began to shine.

"Yes," the old man said, his voice fading, almost lost in the bubbling of the blood in his throat. "All . . . men . . . are . . . you."

"They are," Francis said exultantly. "They are," he said loudly, speaking to the murmuring air that brought him the pulsing of the city's life and the beat of the march of its men on their streets. The old man's voice dropped to a mumble, and Francis bent closer over him. "I will," he said. "In the name of Christ, I promise I will!"

"Is it a parade?" John Cantrell was whispering. "Then it must be Fourth of July." His mouth fell open suddenly, and the blood gushed out onto the battleground.



A NOTE ON THE *Type*

IN WHICH THIS BOOK IS SET

This book was set on the Linotype in Janson, a recutting made direct from the type cast from matrices made by Anton Janson some time between 1660 and 1687.

Of Janson's origin nothing is known. He may have been a relative of Justus Janson, a printer of Danish birth who practised in Leipzig from 1614 to 1635. Some time between 1657 and 1668 Anton Janson, a punch-cutter and type-founder, bought from the Leipzig printer Johann Erich Hahn the type-foundry which had formerly been a part of the printing house of M. Friedrich Lankisch. Janson's types were first shown in a specimen sheet issued at Leipzig about 1675. Janson's successor, and perhaps his son-in-law, Johann Karl Edling, issued a specimen sheet of Janson types in 1689.

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